

TWO  
SERMONS:

One against  
ADULTERY;

The Other, of the  
NATURE, ART, and ISSUE  
Of the

*Christian Warfare.*

WITH A  
DISCOURSE,

Shewing the CONSISTENCY of  
God's Infinite Goodness

With his *Foreknowledge* of the  
FALL of MAN.

By NATHANAEL WHALEY, A.M.  
Rector of Broughton in Northamptonshire.

L O N D O N,  
Printed by J. H. for Brab. Aylmer at the  
Three Pigeons against the Royal Exchange in  
Cornhill, 1698.

STATION

AND

ISSUE

OF

THE

STATION

AND

ISSUE

OF

THE

STATION

A  
 SERMON  
 AGAINST  
 ADULTERY.

Gen. XXXIX. 9.

..... *How then can I do this great  
 Wickedness, and sin against God?*

**I**N the seven and thirtieth Chapter  
 of this most *Ancient* and *Authen-  
 tick* History, *Moses*, the undoubt-  
 ed Author of it, is very exact in  
 relating the various and wonderfull  
*turns* of Providence, which brought  
*Joseph* into *Potiphar's* House; and here  
 he leaves him, till he has given an ac-  
 count of some Miscarriages in the life *Ch. 38.*  
 of *Judah*, which he draws with its  
*Shades* and *Blemishes* amongst the  
*brighter* and *fairer* Passages of it. Af-  
 ter this, he resumes the Story of *Jo- Ch. 39.*  
*seph*,

## A Sermon against Adultery.

*Joseph*, and acquaints us with his courteous Entertainment in *Potiphar's* house, with the great *Trust* his Master reposed in him, the mighty *Reputation* he gain'd by his prudent and faithfull Management, the *strange* Success which attended all his Undertakings, his gratefull Remembrance of the signal Honours and Favours his munificent Patron had conferr'd upon him: And to compleat his *Character*, the Divine Historian tells you of his eminent virtue in defeating the *perfidious* and *lewd* Desires of his *amorous* and *importunate* Mistress, whose wicked and shameless *Courtships* he dash't with this short and pious Answer, *How then can I do this great Wickedness, and sin against God?*

In the words the most obvious and material things are these two:

I. *Joseph's* Sentiment of Adultery, or the Violation of the *Conjugal Union*; viz. that it is a great Wickedness and Offence against God.

II. The excellent use he made of it, which was to repel the rude *Insults* of his *salacious* Mistress, and free himself from the danger of *sinning* with her.

How

## *A Sermon against Adultery.*

*How then can I do this great Wickedness? &c.* As if he had said, I can never consent to so false and vile an action as you tempt me to; a thing never to be answered to God or Man: the God, whom from my Infancy I was taught to fear, by whose Providence I was conducted under your *hospitable* Roof: Or the good Man that has nobly cherisht my Ambition, and rewarded my poor endeavours to serve him. *Joseph*, you see, had a present and lively sense of the *Horror* of the Crime he was tempted to: and this was apparently owing to his *religious* Education, by which his mind was strongly *impregnated* with the *Fear of God*: and having these advantages, he easily overcame the *surprizing Temptation*, and so doing, has happily left us these three Instructions.

I. That the strongest Temptations to the most flattering and deceitfull Vices are not *invincible*.

II. That a good Education is a mighty advantage towards the leading a virtuous and unspotted Life, and overcoming the greatest Temptations to Vice and Wickedness.

## A Sermon against Adultery.

III. That the *Fear of God* quickned with a *present and lively* Apprehension of the great evil of Sin, is a sovereign and effectual *Preservative* against the most charming and powerfull Allurements to it.

To each of these Particulars I shall speak in their order: and first of

I. *Joseph's Sentiment of Adultery*, or the Violation of the Conjugal Union, which he deservedly calls a *great Wickedness and Offence against God*. And this, I doubt not, will appear from *Principles* generally allowed for the most exact and authentick *Measures of good and evil*: such as the *Light of Nature*, the declared *sense of Mankind* concerning the intrinsic *Goodness and Turpitude* of Actions, the Authority of *Divine Revelation*, and the *natural Tendency* of things (verified by *continual Experience*) to produce good or bad effects in the World. If men will dispute such *Principles* as these, I have nothing at present to say to them, but that they may do well no longer to dissemble their *Sentiments*, but play upon the *Square*, and fairly tell the World,

World, they know no difference in the *Nature* of Actions, but what is *made* by the present Sense or Remembrance of *Pain* or *Pleasure*: That Mankind is *degenerated* by aspiring to *better Manners* than the Brutes: and that they are not at all *ambitious* to retain to that *order* of Beings, that must needs *distinguish* themselves from their *Fellow-Creatures* by a *lofty Pretence* to *Reason and Religion*.

My Business, at present, is with men of a *better rank*, I mean such as are sensible of the *true Worth* and *Dignity* of humane Nature, and that the *worst* part of it (the Body) is much too good to be enslaved to *obscene* and *unworthy Lusts*, and dragg'd through all the *Filth* and *Dishonour* of a madly voluptuous Life; who when they are tempted to a *Debauch*, or overset by a *violent Appetite* to unlawfull Pleasures, do smartly feel a *controuling Principle* within them; or if they have been *overtaken in a Fault*, do yet retain a *blushing Sense* of Virtue and Religion, are willing to understand *their Errors*, to be reminded of the *danger* of them, and to be armed against the worst that may befall them for the future. And such

## A Sermon against Adultery.

Persons will, I hope, in kindness to *themselves*, have the Patience and Ingenuity to consider,

That the Character in the Text is agreeable to the *general Sense* of Mankind, especially of the most *refined* and *civilized* Nations. For that this was no *distinguishing* Notion of the Family or Religion of *Abraham*, is evident by *Pharoah's* Discourse with *Abraham*; and *Abimelech's* on the like occasion; and by *Joseph's Imprisonment*, to hide the Naughtinels of his Mistress, who with an Impudence *peculiar* to her character, vehemently accused him of attempting her Chastity. By these Testimonies, it is plain that *Adultery* was esteem'd a great Sin in the Courts of *Egypt* and *Palestine*, and these are some of the most *ancient Nations* we read of in *authentick* Histories. And indeed in all Countries, from the first *Dawn* of Learning and Civility among them (not excepting those that pretend to greater Antiquity) it has ever had an *ill Name*, and is generally lookt upon as one of the *rankest* Debaucheries and Corruptions of humane Nature. As such, it was condemned long before the *Distinction* of Heathens, Jews,

Gen. 12.  
18, 19.  
Gen. 20.  
9, 10.  
Gen. 39.  
20.

China, Tartary, Peru.

Jews, and Christians: and ever since by the *wisest* Nations, that had nothing but the *weak Taper* of Nature to guide them. And therefore it must be *evil in it self*; for the *Light of Nature* discovers nothing to be *evil*, but what is *evil* in its *own Nature*: and what is so must be *evil* in all Ages, Persons, and Circumstances. Nor does the practice of this Vice, *without controul*, in some *wild* and *barbarous* Nations, overthrow the force of this Argument, any more than the *Toleration* of other Immoralities in some *dark* Ages and Countries, or the open *Profession* of gross and palpable *Errors*, proves the *Rectitude* of such Actions and Errors, or will excuse their Contrariety to right Reason and Religion. 'Tis enough to justify the Censure in the Text, that it agrees with the *best* and *general* Reason of Mankind.

And this, methinks, should satisfy those Men, who laying aside all *Revelation*, depend upon *natural Reason* as the *only Guide* and Director of their Thoughts and Actions; there being nothing *plainer* in the Eye of *natural Reason*, than that the actions which are *contrary* to it are *evil*, and will be so,

as

## A Sermon against Adultery.

as long as there is a *rational Nature*. That is, God has framed the Nature of *Man* so agreeably to his own *Perfection*, as to shew him what is *essentially good and evil* by the *Light* of his own *Reason*, and to stamp the Dictates of it as a *Law* upon his Mind; and therefore Sins committed against *this Law* must be great Offences against *God*, because he is both the *Maker* of the *Law*, and of the *Nature* he designed to govern by it.

2. Adultery violates the *Divine Institution* of Marriage, which laid the *Foundation* of all humane Society, was designed to perpetuate the *Race* of Mankind, and unite Men by the most *natural Ties* and *Endearments* in all *friendly Offices*, and in the solemn *Worship* and Adorations of *God*. The Union of *Man* and *Woman* in the *Conjugal State* was ordained for these *excellent* ends; which, considering the *present Constitution* of humane Nature, are no less necessary to our *Happiness* in *this World*, than the *Blessed Society* of glorious *Saints* and *Angels* is to the Happiness of the *next*. And accordingly this was one of the transcendent Blessings of *Paradise*, without which the  
Garden

*Garden of Eden*, with its rich and delicious Variety of all other Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, had been more like a *Desert*, than a *Paradise*, to any single Possessor of it. For if we look into the *Frame* of our Nature, and consider how essential *Amity* and *Friendship* are to the *Felicity* of a reasonable Creature, or that *Greatness* of *Soul* Man (the designed *Emperour* of this lower World) was liberally endowed withal, when first he came out of his *Maker's* hand, it was plainly impossible for *Man* to be alone and be happy. For to be happy is not to have more good in view than we can grasp or enjoy; This may make us miserable, but can never make us happy. To be happy, is to have all things suitable to our just Desires: and what can we imagine more desirable to Man in his solitary state of Innocence, than to have something in his own Shape and Likeness, capable of conversing with him, and, by dividing, of encreasing his Joys? and then if God had denied him this convenient help, after he had made him meet for Society, and exchanges of Love and Kindness, he would certainly have been apt to languish, and (like a disappointed

appointed Lover in the *Absence* of his peculiar Delight) to complain to the Winds and Fountains, or the mated Birds and Beasts, of his *unke* and *lonesome* State, and to grow *melancholy* upon the Walks of *Paradise*, while he had all the *Treasures*, and all the *silent Beauties* of Nature about him, and wanted nothing but *another self* to relish and complete his Happiness.

And this shews the state of *Marriage* Heb. 13.4. to be *Honourable*, and consistent with the highest degrees of *Purity* and *Innocence* in our present Circumstances: And that it was appointed for a *general good*, and for one of the choicest Comforts and Entertainments of Life. The *Time*, *Place*, and *Author* of this Institution are undeniable Arguments of its *Purity* and *Wisdom*; and the Reason it was founded upon, *viz.* because *it was not good for man to be alone*, re- Gen. 2.18. commends the *Conjugal State* as good and convenient in all Ages, and to Persons of all Ranks and Qualities that are sensible of the want of this *Friendly Society*.

'Tis

'Tis farther observable, as an *inde-  
 lible* mark of the *Sanctity* of this Insti-  
 tution, that it was immediately decla-  
 red by God himself; and at the same  
 time was signally *honoured* (as is Gen. 2. 24.  
 thought by very learned Interpreters)  
 with the glorious Appearance of the  
*Divine Majesty*, attended with the *Hea-  
 venly Host*, at the happy *Esponsals* of  
 our First Parents. And, we know,  
 when any occasion was offered to *our*  
*Saviour* of speaking to this Argument, Matth. 19.  
 that he constantly affirm'd the *Sacred-* 3, 4, 5.  
*ness* of the Marriage-Union, as ground-  
 ed upon the *original* Institution; and  
 that he chose to grace the Wedding in Joh. 2. 1.  
*Cana of Galilee* with his *first Miracle*. &c.

Now to *violate* this dear and sacred  
 Union by *Adulterous* Mixtures, is a  
 perfect Contradiction to the *Ordinance*  
 of God, and the *kind* Provision he has  
 made for the *Harmony* of the World;  
 it is an *insolent* Contempt of his *Sove-  
 reignty* over his Creatures, of his right  
 to fix them in their several *Stations*,  
 and appoint them *their bounds* which  
*they shall not pass*, to limit their De-  
 sires to their *proper Objects*, and re-  
 strain them from invading the *Rights*,  
 and ravishing the *reserved* and *incom-  
 municable*

*municable* Treasures of each other. For what greater insolence can there be, than to dispute the *Government* of the World with the *Maker* of it? To remove the *Bounds* of Entercourse and Society, which the Wisdom of God hath establisht from the *Beginning*, and prostitute his Holy Institutions to the Gratification of a lawless and brutish Appetite? Was ever any Law given to Men more plainly worded, more solemnly publisht, edg'd and inforc'd with sharper Threatnings, or more frequently inculcated by the Prophets and Messengers of God, than this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*? The Violation therefore of this Law must be highly dishonourable and offensive to him.

3. It is an act of shamefull Turpitude and Impurity in it self. It stains the Image of God upon the Soul, and defiles the Body; both which being consecrated to God's peculiar Service in our Baptism, [are properly styled his Temple in Scripture; Know ye not (saith the Apostle) that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you? And if any man defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy: for the Temple of God is holy, which

1 Cor. 6.  
19.

1 Cor. 3.  
17.

which Temple ye are. And then Fornication and Adultery are no common Pollutions in a Christian, but high degrees of Prophanation and Impiety: Tell it not to the Heathen World; they are certainly, next to Idolatry, the most sacrilegious Abuses of the best things devoted to God's peculiar Service and Honour. For Christians are not only the Temple of the living God (as St. 2 Cor. 6. Paul calls them) but they are his <sup>12</sup> 16. living and most holy Temple. His Spiritual House, in St. Peter's Phrase, may 1 Pet. 2. his Holy and Royal Priesthood, ordained to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. So that for a Christian to defile himself with fleshly Lusts, is to add Prophaness to Impurity. It is to defile at once God's Temple, Priest, and Altar, and to make his best Sacrifices loathsome and Abominable to him; to obstruct all kind and amicable Entercourse between God and him, and to grieve and discharge his holy and ever Blessed Spirit, that Divine Guest whom he hath sent to abide with us for ever, and to sanctifie, and seal us to the Day of Redemption.

4. Adultery is a Crime of the greatest *Baseness* and *Treachery* towards our *honest* and *innocent* Neighbour. There is such a Complication of Evils, so much palpable *Injustice*, *Infamy* and *Falshood* in every act of this Sin, that it is commonly reckoned by the unhappy Relations of the *offending* Parties, that have any *Sparks* of Honour or Virtue in them, one of the sharpest Tryals of *Patience*, one of the *heaviest* *Crosses* and Afflictions that are incident to them in this World. By this means the *good* Man is not only deprived (contrary to all Law and Equity) of his certain and apparent Rights; but he is shamefully *betrayed* and *supplanted* in his *choicest* and most valuable Interests; things of that extremely *nice*, *tender*, and *peculiar* Nature, that it is hardly possible to compute the vast *Injuries* he suffers by the Invader of them; such are,

1. The Virtue and Fidelity of his Wife; to be wrong'd in whom, and bereaved of that singular *Delight* and *Complacency* which flows from the Society of a *chast* and *faithfull* Consort, is to lose the *Flower* of his Happiness in this World. And be sure the more kind  
and

and virtuous the good Man is, the sharper is his Pain and Anguish to behold the delight of his Eyes raviſht from his own into the circle of a Strangers arms, there by wicked Arts and Enchantments beguiled of her Innocence, and transform'd into a loathſome and perſidious Creature. For what perſon can be more vile and nauſeous (how fair ſoever in her Looks and Pretences) or more wretchedly falſe and treacherous than ſhe, that in Contempt of her Altar-Vows, her moſt ſolemn and religious Promiſes, before God and the World, of untainted Loyalty and Affection to her Husband, conſents to the cleweſt Practices, and commits the fouleſt Treasons againſt him! That with her veil of Modetty caſts off all regard to the Honour of her Religion, her Birth, and Family, prostitutes her ſelf to a mean and ignoble Paſſion, and forſakes the Cryſtal Stream of Conjugal and Chast Enjoyments, to wallow in the Mire and Puddle of diſhoneſt and brutal Pleaſure! She that lives in Pleaſure <sup>1 Tim. 5. 6.</sup> (ſaith the Apoſtle) is dead while ſhe lives. And certainly 'tis the worſt kind of Death ante mortem perire (as Seneca ſpeaks) to periſh alive, and meet

*Corruption* on this side the Grave, as many of the wild Lovers of Pleasure chuse to do, rather than lead (as they esteem it) a dull, virtuous life; the mean while they are dead to all the good purposes of living, and not only so, but live in a state of Death and Putrefaction; they feel themselves rotting and perishing before their time, till their Life grows a Burden to themselves, and a Nuisance to all that are about them; As if they only came in to the world to annoy it, and had contrived to do the Work and Business of the Grave, before they descend into it.

Such is the Tendency of this pernicious Course, the very entrance into which, as it often proves, is more than half the way to the Depths of Hell: and then it must needs grieve the heart of any Generous and good-natured Man, to see the Wife of his Bosom, whom he loved as his own Soul, and cherisht as his own Flesh, so far engaged and so miserably lost in the Paths of Vice and Ruin, and to lose one half of his Life and Happiness by her vile Apostasy. To give the true Account to such a sorrow as this, when it first throbs and beats against the Breast that is delug'd with

with it, is not in the power of *Eloquence*: Nature only can do it by *inimitable* Sighs and Pangs, whilst the greatest degrees of *Grace* are little enough to bear up *the Spirit* of Man, under so *pressing and unwieldy* a Calamity.

2. His own Reputation and Honour suffer greatly by this foul and treacherous Act. For tho' the *good Man* never expos'd himself to the *Censure* of the world; tho' it may be he has all the *true Principles* of Honour, Prudence, and Integrity in him, and the worst that can be said of him is, *the poor Man was unhappy in his Choice*: yet such is the *ill-Nature* of the World, and the *Levity* of vain people (who must be ever talking of the Crimes, and entertaining themselves with the Misfortunes of their Neighbours) that he is sure to be *upbraided* with his Calamity, and to have his *good Name* bandied in Sport and Scurrility: and perhaps a great deal more than if he had *blacken'd* it himself with *Vice*, or had not provoked a perverse and *adulterous Generation* by *daring* to be chaste and virtuous in it. 'Tis very unnatural, I am sure, to jeer and rail upon mens *Misfortunes*, i. e. to abuse my Neighbour

B 2

merely

merely for being *unhappy*, and leave him nothing but his *Innocence* to support and comfort him: to *revive* his sorrows, and keep his mind upon the *rack*, when he needs the very *kindest* and *tenderest* Usage I can possibly give him. And this, as *light* a matter as it seems, we cannot but observe, is very *hard* upon the *sufferer* in the present Case; nay, is often reputed one of the most *grievous* Circumstances in his sorrowfull and uneasy Condition.

3. He is continually liable to be teaz'd and tortur'd with the *Spirit of Jealousie*. And surely there is not a greater *Torment* to any *Candid* and ingenuous Person: But when it seizes a Man of *high* and *violent* Passions, what strange *Combustion* does it make in his *Spirit*! He is instantly *all in a Flame*, his Breast *glows*, his Heart *burns* with *Revenge*, his Eyes *flash* with *Indignation*, not to be *quenck'd* with his *own* or the *Tears* of his *compassionate Friends*; now he appears like a perfect *Fury*, fierce and inexorable; Curses his *Bridal Day*, nay the *Day* in which he was *born*; Then thinks of a thousand *Re-venges*, but knows not *which* to pursue, till some *unlucky Accident* determines his

his choice; and then, if he either *falls short* of his Design, or *over-acts* it with Rage and Cruelty, he presently turns *pale* like a *Ghost*, starts and trembles at every *shadow*, as if every thing that approacht him *now*, came to upbraid him with his Folly or Misery.

I don't say this is the *constant* or the *onely* effect of *Jealousie*, it being true of this as of all other *Distempers* of the Mind, that it varies according to the *different Complexion* of the Patient, and the good or bad Habits his Mind is furnished or infested with. And hence *Jealousie* (as *St. Chrysostom* observes) has two very *contrary* effects; which he calls *Ἀδυναμίαν καὶ θυμὸν*; the first is such *Περὶ παρ-  
δειας,  
Cap. 52.* a *Dulness* and *Heaviness* of Mind, as makes a man perfectly *stupid* and *insensible* of all things but his proper grief: The other is insatiate Rage and Fury, always prompting and provoking him to *hasten* and *signalize* his Revenge; not to be *discouraged* with difficulties, nor *soften'd* with Intreaties; not to be *pacified* with the *deepest* Submissions; not to be satisfied with the *largest* Overtures; not so much as to wait the *Leasure* of *publick Justice*, but follow his *own Methods*, pursue his *Adver-*

## A Sermon against Adultery.

sary with the utmost Severity, and inflict the speediest and sharpest Vengeance upon him. And this Solomon long since observed, *Prov. 6. 34. 35. Jealousie is the rage of a Man: therefore he will not spare in the day of Vengeance. He will not regard any Ransom, neither will he rest content, tho' thou givest many gifts.*

4. The good man is greatly wrong'd in the Honour and Interests of his Family, his innocent Children suffering with their abused Father, and inheriting the vast Infelicities, their lewd Mother hath liberally entail'd upon them. 'Tis their unhappiness to descend from a naughty and perfidious Woman, to want the Influence of a Mothers Care and Piety in their tender Years, and it may be to derive a sickly and ill-addicted Nature from her, a tainted Constitution of Mind and Body, instead of the true Principles of a virtuous and happy Life. 'Tis their continual Grief to observe the Fairs and Dissentions of their divided Parents, especially when they come to learn the dismal occasion of them, and behold their Estate and Patrimony melting away between the unnatural Heats of  
 Conten-

Contention, and the prodigal *Flames* of Lust. 'Tis their wrong to have the *Brood* of the Adulterer cherisht and brought up with them, who through the *Subtilty* of her that bare him is often made *the Darling* of the Family, and too often goes away with a *fairer Portion* than any of the *Legitimate* Children of it.

These are the *genuine* and most ordinary Effects of this *rampant* and *furious* Lust. These are the *kindnesses* of the false Adulterer to his *harmless unthinking* Neighbour, while he carries on his *amorous Plots* against him with the *fairest* Pretences, and the *highest* Protestations of Love and Friendship to him and his Family; a *Love* more *fatal* than *Death*, and *cruel* than the *Grave*; especially to its *dearest* Object, against which it levels its *fieryest Darts*, and for which it reserves the deepest and forest Ruine. Its very *first* Wound is *deadly* and desperately *cruel*; the *Chastity* of a Wife being *deservedly* esteemed at a much higher Value than the brightest and most charming *Beauty*, the finest and pleasantest *Wit*, the richest *Dowry*, or even the sweetest and most agreeable *Mien* and *Temper*. And

Matth.  
19. 9.

the Reason why men generally set a greater price upon this than other good Properties is, because of all others it is most essential to Conjugal Love and Union; insomuch that the Violation of this one, breaks the whole Chain of amicable and social Virtues, without which no Society, tho' founded upon Divine Institution, can possibly hold and be happy. And this doubtless was the reason why our Saviour, who was infinitely tender of the Rights of Mankind, gave the Jews a liberty of Divorce in the desperate Case of Adultery. The want of some Accomplishments in a Loyal Consort may be made up by a Plenitude of other Graces and Advantages: but the Loss of Chastity can never be repaired in kind or value; No equivalent can be given for it, the stolen Treasure can never be restored: the Flower that is blasted, can never recover its verdant Beauty.

5. I might add to this heavy Charge, that Adultery is highly injurious to the common good and welfare of Men. The Contention it kindles in a private Family is seldom extinguish'd there, but frequently breaks out, alarms and inflames the Neighbourhood into Riots and

and Factions, to the Disturbance of the *publick* Peace, the levying of *war*, and the Subversion (sometimes) of *Kingdoms* and *Governments*; to the grief of all good men, and the Encouragement of the *boldest* and most *incurable* Vices. It were endless to reckon up the *Judgments* and *Calamities* which this Sin alone has brought upon the World. Who can count the *Treasure* it has wasted, or tell how much *Virtue* it has betrayed, how many *Duels* it has fought, how many *Lives* it has cost, how many *Innocents* it has massacred, how many *strong men have been* Prov. 7. *slain by it*; what *Havock* it has made <sup>26.</sup> in *ancient* and *illustrious* Families, and what *Confusion* in the *Race* of *Mankind*?

6. The last Argument I shall name of the greatness of this Sin, is the Punishment which God, whose Judgments are always righteous, and never exceed the measure of our Iniquities, hath allotted for it. And this makes another very dreadful Scene. There is Infamy, Hatred, Pain, and Poverty coming on *like an armed Man*; then a Prov. 6. 24, *dismal Train* of cruel, noisom, and fierce <sup>Or.</sup> Diseases, followed close by the ghastly  
ly

Prov. 7.  
23.

Eph. 5. 5.

ly King of Terrors in a sorrowfull and untimely hour; All gathering about the Criminal, till the latter having pierc'd his Liver with a poyson'd Dart, ~~seizes~~ and carries him off to God's high Tribunal; the mean while the Heavens shew their Displeasure in terrible Flashes of Divine Wrath upon the Conscience of the Sinner, who had been often told from thence (but perhaps till his dying Day, and his uneasie Pillow forc'd the unwelcome thought upon him, never laid it to his heart) that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Person hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God. The Air of that holy place is infinitely too pure for him, the Conversation too refined and spiritual, the Company too noble and excellent to admit so sordid and corrupt a Member into their Blessed Society. And because such men are every way apt to turn the Grace of God into wantonness, and to argue from it, that for short Pleasures he will not exclude them from eternal Joys, and much less inflict eternal Torments upon them; he has given them fair warning to expect that he will be true to his Threatnings. Be not deceived (saith the Apostle) neither

*ther Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, shall inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. But still there is a much sadder Doom behind, the Terroure of which is beyond all Conception, Rev. 21. 8. where Whoremongers (with other very bad Company) are sentenc'd to the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, the 'fiercest Emblem of Divine Indignation, for ever and ever; and who can dwell with everlasting Burnings!*

Thus I have prov'd, that the *Violation* of the Conjugal Union is a great *Wickedness*, which was *Joseph's* Sentiment of it: And the Result of what hath been spoken is, that whosoever indulgeth himself in so vile a Practice, renounceth the Principles of *natural*, as well as *revealed* Religion, and is an utter Apostate from *Virtue* and *Honour*. For, in good earnest, what is he, who to gratifie the Passion of a Goat, deflowers the *Image*, and despises the *Institutions* of his Maker? Defiles his *Temple*, and cares not what *Infamy* and *Mischief* he brings upon his honest and inoffensive *Neighbour*? who is guilty of the *foulest Treachery* towards him, tempting his Wife out of his

Prov. 2.

17.

his Bosom to commit *Lewdness* and *Perjury*, to break her most *sacred Vows*, to forsake the *Guide of her Youth*, and renounce the *Covenant of her God*? To be the *Plague* and *Ruin* of her Family, to endure the utmost *Hatred* and *Scorn* of Men, and for a few *Moments* of *false Pleasure* to be *eternally damn'd*? who is a *common Enemy* to Mankind, who defies the *impartial Justice* of Heaven, and *breaks through* all the *Fences* of *Modesty*, *Religion*, and the *Fear of Hell*, to *steal* a forbidden Pleasure, and to *ravish* an infamous and impure *Enjoyment*? If this be a Man of *Virtue* and *Honour*, 'tis time to cashier the *Distinctions* of *good* and *evil*; After this let all *Contradictions* be reconciled; let *Light* be clothed with *Sables*, and *Darkness* put on the *Brightness* and *Serenity* of the Day; let there be no more dispute about the *Nature* or *Merit* of *Actions*, but let all things be just, as every mans *Fancy* or *Humour* paints them. Rejoyce, O young Man in thy *Youth*, and let thy *Heart* cheer thee in the *days of thy Youth*, and walk in the *ways of thy Heart*, and in the *sight of thine Eyes*. But pause a little, and know thou, that for all these things,  
 and God

Eccles. 11.

9.

*God will bring thee into Judgment.*

I proceed now to the second General.

II. The use which *Joseph* made of this *Thought* upon the rude Assault of his Master's Wife. By the *Impulse* of it he immediately dasht the Temptation, and rescued his Innocence with this pious Answer, *How can I do this great Wickedness?* &c. which came very naturally from one that had been blest with a *virtuous Education*, that was brought up in the *Fear of God*, and descended (as *Joseph* was) from the *best-ordered* and the *most religious* Family upon Earth; whose great Ancestor was dignified with the character of the *Friend of God*, and of one that would command his Children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment. *Jacob* also had frequent *Intercourse* with God, and *Joseph* being his Father's Darling, there is no doubt but he took particular care to adorn and enrich his Mind with good Principles, as he had done to cloath him with costly and invidious Raiment. And this was it that preserv'd his Innocence, upheld

Gen. 18.19.

Gen. 37.3.

## A Sermon against Adultery.

upheld his *Integrity*, and laid the *Foundation* of all his *Greatness* in *Egypt*: It was the *Fear of God* timely and gradually *instill'd* into him by his religious Parent, which made him inflexible to all *Temptations*, even in his *boiling Youth*, and amidst the most *inflaming* and *importuning* *Circumstances*. And from hence we gain the following *Instructions*.

I. That the strongest *Temptations* to the most flatterring and deceitfull *Vices* are not invincible. There is no *Age* of the *Life* of *Man* so eager of forbidden *Pleasures*; or so little acquainted with the *Fallacies* of them, as *Youth*. And if frail *Youth*, when so highly tempted can refuse to sin, and is able to withstand the *Charms* and *Allurements* of *Female Courtship*; if a *Hebrew Servant* can despise the *Flames* of an *Egyptian Lady*, was not caught by her treacherous *Wiles*, nor bend'd by her *Commands*, neither by her smiling nor imperious *Looks*; was not vanquish't by her repeated *Importunities*, nor awed by the *Fears* of her *Revenge*, nor inveig'l'd by the hopes of *Secrecy*, nor soften'd by the *Liberties* of *Egypt*, nor betray'd by the *Frailties* of *Flesh* and

and Blood; then surely are all the Forces of Vice *resistible*, and there is no Danger of any *Compulsion* to be wicked. If *Josaph* refused the most *flattering Pleasures*, and *Moses* the *Royal Honours and Delights* of the Court of *Egypt*, *choosing* rather to suffer *Affliction* Heb. ii. 25. with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; No man in the like circumstances can have any reason to complain that he lies under a necessity of sinning. For let the man that would vainly discharge his sins upon the *Fatality* of humane Actions consider with himself, whether he has not the same *Faculties* which other men have; the same power of *choosing* and *refusing* what is fit and unfit to be done, of weighing the *Arguments* on both sides, and determining on that which best recommends it self to his *Reason* and *Judgment*: And what it is that hinders him from being as *stanch* and *resolute* against a wicked Custom or *Action*, as those whom the same *Arguments* which lie before him have prevailed upon, and the excellent *Men* of all Ages have ever been. If he thinks that all Mankind are determined by a rigid and irresistible *Fate*, to do all the  
evil

evil that has been done in the world,  
 let him reconcile his opinion, if he  
 can, to the *general Sense* and *Experi-*  
*ence* of Mankind, who are conscious  
 of nothing more than a *Freedom* of  
*Choice* and *Action*, and find it *natural*  
 to chide and accuse themselves for a-  
 cting contrary to the Dictates of their  
 own *reason*, and the holy *Oracles* of  
 God; insomuch, that if they had the  
*highest Freedom* imaginable, they could  
 not have greater Assurance of it, than  
 they now have of that *degree* of *Liber-*  
*ty* which is commonly ascribed to them,  
 and every *penitent Sinner* is an undeni-  
 able *Witness* and *Confessor* of. And  
 here I would ask the *Fatalist* a fair que-  
 stion or two. As first, what greater Evidence can  
 there be of a *free Agent* in any crimi-  
 nal Case, than his *pleading guilty* to  
 the Indictments of his own *Conscience*?  
 Secondly, What better Argument than  
 this, can he or any other *Fatalist* bring  
 to prove the contrary? And then Third-  
 ly, I would only ask him, How he knows  
 himself to be a *necessary Agent*, since  
 no other Agents of *this kind* have any  
*Knowledge* of the Principles they are  
 acted by? And 'tis certain, they have

no use of any such knowledge, being wholly moved and determined by *external Causes and Objects*, or *some secret instinct*, whose Powers they never dispute, or fail of their obedience to; and yet as truly serve the *end* of their Beings, as if they had all the Perfections of an *Angel* to dispose them to it.

And the like answer may be given to the Plea of *humane Frailty*, as it is frequently urged to lessen the *Grace of God*, and to magnifie the *power of Temptations* above the *stated Measures and Attainments* of it; *viz.* that it contradicts the experience of all the *great Examples* of *Virtue and Piety*, and the *Confessions* of penitent and *self-convicted Sinners*, who when they are *most sensible* of the *Frailties* of *humane Nature*, and are *themselves* some of the *saddest Instances* of them, do heartily bewail their easie Compliances, and score their Miscarriages upon their own *Folly and Wickedness*. 'Tis indeed a common (and in some mens' esteem a very plausible) excuse to say, *It was ill done; but what Flesh could withstand such Temptations? The greatest Virtue must have submitted to them: But how*

do they know this, that have so little *Virtue* as to libel the *Grace of God*, and the *Integrity* of all good Men, who have stood their ground, and maintain'd their *Innocence* against the most violent *Gusts* of Temptation, and the fiercest *Assaults* of Hell? The World is not ignorant, that there have been Persons of *eminent* Goodness and Integrity in all Ages of it; Men that have fill'd the *Mouth of Fame* with their generous and noble Actions, that have had the *hardness* to resist the *softest* charms and the *grimmeſt* Terrours of *Sense*, and have encountred all kinds of Temptation with *good Success*, while they stood upon the *same* level, and were *subject* to like *Passions* and *Infirmities* with our selves. And since we have the *same Assurances* of Divine Grace and Assistance which they had, 'tis *impious* and infinitely *vain* to think of easing our *guilty Minds*, by throwing off the blame of our Impurities and Sins upon *Fate*, or *Nature*, or the *Temptations* which are *common* to Men, when nothing can make us *Sinners* but *our selves*. Infinite power it self cannot *compell* us to a Fault; I mean, not only because it is *inseparable* from infinite

nite *Goodness*; but because it is *irresistible*, and there can be *no fault* in yielding to a *Force* which there can be *no possibility* of resisting. And this will justify the Dealings of God with the *Despisers* of his *Grace* and *Gospel* to all *Eternity*, that they have *chosen* their own ruin, and left him *no way* to prevent it, but to put up their *intolerable* Contempt of his *Laws* and *Sanctions*, or break their *specifick Frame*, and destroy the *Freedom* of their Wills, which is *essential* to all true *Virtue* and *Happiness*.

II. That it is a mighty advantage towards the leading a *virtuous* and *unspotted* Life, and avoiding the great *Gulphs* of *Vice* and *Wickedness*, to be brought up in the *Fear of God*, and to have our Minds (while they are *green* and *tender*) season'd by a *good* and *pious* Education. The *Tenour* of our Lives generally depends upon the *first Principles* that are planted in us, and the *Customs* we begin in our *Youth* and *Childhood*; If they be *good*, there is nothing so *sure* and *powerfull* to oppose the *Decoys* and *Flatteries* of *Sin* and *Vice*. And where *such* Principles are not *timely* sown and cherish'd, so as

to grow into some *Strength* and *Confidence*, and be of some use and service to us in our Youth (while Temptations to Pleasure and Vanity look *fresh* and *gay*, and the *Snake* hides it self under the *Flower*). vicious Inclinations will certainly grow up in their *room*, and being more taking and natural to the *depraved Soil*, will mightily obstruct the *Culture* and *Improvement* of it. And hence you may observe, as much as the fashion is to Dispute over all the Principles of *revealed Religion*, no man questions the *Currency* of such Maxims as these, That the greatest *Errors*, both in *Faith* and *Practice* are the unhappy *Fruits* of a *careless* or *vicious Education*; That Youth let loose from the *Reins* of *Discipline* runs the *wildest* of any thing in the *World*; That good *Instruction* and *Education* are necessary to *govern* youthfull *Passions*, to manage *wanton* and *unruly Nature*, and keep it in *the way it should go*; and that the effects of them are commonly *very happy* and *durable*; as the wise *Observer* tells us, *Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* Having drank in the Principles of *divine Wisdom*,

Prov. 22. 6.

dom, his *Eyes* are suddenly inlightned; and being gradually exercised in *discerning between good and evil*, he quickly sees through the *Disguises* of Vice and Folly, and so easily evades the *Delusions* of them.

And this was *Joseph's* Happiness, and a singular Advantage it was to him, when he came to live in a *Family*, and to make a figure in a *Court*, where he had so much *occasion* for it. Alas ! what would the *young man* have done, had he been bred up in the *Mode* and *Fashion* of our Age, to *dress*, and *comb*, and *dance* the round of Luxury and Vanity ? To court the Daughters of *Canaan*, and Revenge the Rape of *Dinah* upon the Sisters of *Sichem*, under the *sparkish* Pretences of *Love* and *Honour* ? Had he learnt his Lesson from the *Stage*, or the *Schools* of Scepticism and Profaneness, been taught to *shrug* and smile at the *grave* Precepts of Morality, and call every thing *silly* that is *serious*, to defie the *Threats* of Religion, to bury his *Fears* in Wine, and then *make a mock at sin*, and a Jest at being *damned* ? Had *Joseph* been thus initiated in the *Mysteries of Iniquity* he had certainly flown into the Tempters

PROV. 7. 23. Arms, like a Bird (as Solomon speaks in his case) that *hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.* He would surely never have disparaged his *Breeding* so much as to stagger at the *greatness* of the Crime, or allow himself a moment to think of the *fatal consequence*; but without Fear or Fore-sight have followed his Leader to the  
 PROV. 7. 27. *Chambers of Death, in the Paths that go down to Hell.*

'Tis true, that the *choice* of our Education lies very little (if at all) in our *own Power*: but therefore it infinitely concerns those into whose *Arms* (by the Providence of God) we are *cast* in our Infancy, and on whom we are forc'd to *lean* all the time of our *Weakness* and *Childhood*, to principle our Minds with an *early Sense* of God and Religion, to *superwise* our Actions, and *rectifie* our Errors, and as it were lead us *by the hand* through the *first Stages* of Virtue and Piety, till we are past the *mighty Dangers* of Youth, and in some measure able to grapple with the Temptations of *Sense*, and secure our selves against the Fallacies and Seductions of the *Devil*. This, we all know, is the immediate and indispensable

ble Duty of *Parents* and *Guardians*, the neglect of which hath ruin'd *prodigious* Numbers of *ignorant* Souls, yea thousands of the *bravest* of our Youth, who might have proved the Strength and Ornaments of our *Church* and *State*, had they begun at the *beginning* of *Wisdom*, been timely train'd up in the *Fear of God*, and carefully taught to *approve the things that are excellent*. Prov. 9. 10. If therefore you desire to see your Children happy, live virtuously, and escape the *Pollutions* which are in the world through *Lust*; If you would not leave an *accursed Brood* behind you, to waste your *Estates* with *riotous living*, and curse you when you are gone, and to your *Faces*, when they meet you at *God's Tribunal*; let your care of them appear, by teaching them betimes *whom they should fear*, that when they are attackt by any *Temptation*, they may be able (as *Joseph* did) to reason themselves into a *Victory* over it; which leads to the third and last Instruction:

III. That the Fear of God quickned with a *present* and *lively* Apprehension of the *great evil* of Sin, is a sovereign

and effectual *Preservative* against the most *charming* and *powerfull* Allurements to it. 'Tis the Nature of Fear to lay a Restraint upon the Mind, while it views the *Danger* that lies before it: and since the greatest *Danger* lies in provoking infinite Justice arm'd with infinite Power, the Fear of God who is invested with *both*, and has threatened the Sinner with everlasting Destruction, must, while he is under the lively Impressions of it, *deaden* all the force of Temptations, and infallibly restrain him from closing with them. And for this reason it is, that God, who is infinitely tender of our immortal Souls, hath *revealed his Wrath from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men*, and kindly *threatned* Destruction on purpose to preserve us from it; it being greatly to be feared, that the Promise of *Heaven* and *everlasting Life* would very hardly have made the *best* Men *good*, if they had not been also *quicken'd* with the Fears of *everlasting Perdition*. For 'tis certain, that in this *guilty* and *degenerate* State we are generally much more *afraid* of being miserable, than *ambitious* to be truly happy. Of which

Rom 1. 18.

I think there needs no plainer Demonstration than this, *viz.* that the *Generality* of Men, even when they are grown *weary* of this World, would be well *contented* to stay here in a tolerable condition to *Eternity*, or when they die to *vanish* into nothing, *only* to be eased of the *danger* of being *everlastingly miserable*. Nay, I doubt not but some *good men* of the *lower Size* in Religion, that have but a moderate share of the Sorrows and Calamities of this Life, would be (were it left to their choice) almost willing to resign their *weak Hopes* of Heaven, for such infallible Securities against the *dreadfull* and eternal Torments of Hell. And since the *fear* of endless Misery has taken so *deep a root* in humane Nature, were our Minds duely *Impregnated* and kept awake with the *Fear of God*, who is both *able to save and destroy*, it is *morally impossible*, but that it must *prevail* over all Temptations to incur his Displeasure, and effectually *curb* our *wildest* and most *unruly* Inclinations to any Lust or Vanity. And hence is that excellent saying of the Wise-man, *Prov.* 28. 14. *Happy is the Man that feareth always*, i. e. that hath the *Fear of God* continually before his Eyes, as a  
faithfull

*Psal.* 36. 1.

*A Sermon against Adultery.*

faithfull *Watch* or *Sentinel* to discover all Approaches of *Danger*, and call in the *Powers* of Reason and Religion to his Defence against them.

No Motive indeed, tho' never so powerfull in it self, has any force upon us any longer than we apprehend our Concernment in it; for which Reason an *actual Apprehension* of the evil of the Crime to which we are tempted, is absolutely necessary to restrain us from it, by *awakening* the Fear of God in our Minds. And therefore when any Temptation is presented to us, if we look only on the *glossie side* of it, and think of nothing but the delicious *Pleasure* or *Profit* the Sin is *varnished* or *gilded* with, and are not aware the mean while, that God has *revealed his Wrath* against it, 'tis evident that what ever we are at other times, we are not *now* afraid of offending him; and then *his Fear* can have no *present effect* upon us, and so it is all one in the Issue, as if we never had any true Reverence for him.

And this was it that made the great Difference between *Joseph* and *David* in the matter we have been treating of. *David* had an *habitual Fear* of  
God

God, and surely in as high a Degree as *Joseph* had : But then there was this Disparity in *his* Case, the Fear of God was not *before his Eyes* when he *bath'd* them in the naked Beauty of *unguarded Bathsheba*; he did not, like *Joseph*, awaken himself into a *vigorous* Consideration of the *great Wickedness* of defiling *Uriah's* Bed. He never argued thus to himself, How can I harbour so *impure* a Thought, and stain my *Royal Purple* with so *foul* an Action, a *Sin* of a far *deeper Dye* ? Shall I thus *offend* ? Thus *requite* the good and mighty God, who chang'd my homely *Crook* into a glorious *Scepter*, and advanced me (the youngest of *Jesse's* House) over all the Sons of *rejected Saul*, to the highest step of *Imperial Honour*, next to *himself* in Power and Dignity, and from *those few sheep* I kept *in the Wilderness*, has made me Ruler over his *beloved Israel* ? Shall I thus *provoke the Lord to Anger* ? Am I *stronger than he* ? Had *David* thus awaken'd himself into an holy Awe of God and *his Goodness*, he had surely beat off the Temptation that so easily *foi'd* him, been innocent of *both* his *presumptuous Sins*, and perfectly clear  
in

*A Sermon against Adultery.*

in the whole *matter* of *Uriah*.

And now, having given you the true *Character* of Adultery, and the *Instructions* left you by the young and pious Example in the Text, I shall close all with a brief Application to two sorts of Persons.

I. To such as are burden'd with the guilt of this heinous Crime: who are to be admonisht, that a Sin of so vast *Malignity* requires a very solemn piercing and unfeigned Repentance; and that the *conscious* Eye and *Impartial* Justice of God are not to be deceived by any *Forms* or *Flashes* of a transient and impenitent Sorrow. Consider then, yours is a crying Sin; To *Heaven* it cries for *Vengeance*, and to you it calls aloud for the deepest *Humiliation* in *Dust* and *Ashes*, the greatest *Contrition* of Mind and Spirit, the utmost *Satisfaction* in your power to the injured Parties, the freest and most abasing *Confessions* to Almighty God, the sincerest *Vows* and *Resolutions* of a new and unspotted Life, the strictest *Covenant* with your Eyes, the strongest *Guard* upon all the *Avenues* of Lust and Wantonness, and the nicest Care to avoid the very least *Pollutions* of the  
Flesh

*Flesh or Spirit*, together with a most passionate endeavour to rescue the poor *Captives* that are tied and bound with the *Chain of your Sins*, and were by you betrayed into the *Snare of the Devil*. What *Rivers of Tears* can wash away so deep a Stain? What *Piercings of Heart and Soul*? What *Self-Condernnation and Abhorrence*? What *lively Applications* to the *Merits of your Redeemer* ought to accompany your *servent and constant Prayers* for the *Forgiveness of so great a Wickedness*? A *Wickedness so great*, that the greatest *Purity of Life* is little enough to take off the *Blemish of one single Act* of it, and restore the Joys of *that blessed* Psal. 51. 12. *Hoped Hope of being meet at last for the glorious Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. And then, into what a *wretched Condition* hath that man brought himself, that has a *long course of Fornications and Adulteries* to answer for, and is still to begin the whole *Christian Race*? He had need, I am sure to live the *reverse of his Life* apace: I mean, to spend the remainder in continual *Acts of Mortification, Devotion, and Preparation* for his *dying hour*; in *unravelling* (as far as he is able) all the *evil*

## A Sermon against Adultery.

*evil* he has done, and doing all the *good*, which the *Mercy* and *Patience* of God, his short time, and *unhappy* Circumstances may have left him opportunity for. 'Tis certain that God has pardon'd some very *great* and *infamous* Sinners; but then they were *great Penitents* too. And surely there is nothing more *becoming* such as have been very *bad* themselves, than to attempt some *generous* and *eminent* thing towards the Reformation of a *degenerate* and *adulterous* Age; something that may heal the Honour of *Virtue*, that may help to appease the *Anger of Heaven*, and to banish the *Vices* which they; their Families, and Country have dearly smarted for; that the World may be once *the better* for them before they leave it, and their *good* Actions may help to bury the *Memory* and *Infection* of their *bad*.

2. Such as have not defiled themselves with *carnal* Lusts, and particularly those that are *young* and *tender* of the *Honour* they owe their *Bodies*, or are curious in their *Washes* and *Dresses*, and love to appear *orient* and *gay*, without the least *Spot* of Soil or Impurity, ought to be extremely cautious  
of

of all *Approaches* to this notoriously *shamefull* and *odious* Vice. Other Sins comparatively (as the Apostle speaks) <sup>1 Cor. 6. 18.</sup> are without the Body; but he that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own Body, i. e. he deflowers the Purity of his excellent Nature, he commits a Rape upon himself, and so defiles his <sup>1 Thess. 4. 4.</sup> holy Profession, which is to preserve his Body (as a sacred Vessel) in Sanctification and Honour, and to keep him- <sup>Jam. 1. 27.</sup> self unspotted from the World. And then what foolish and fulsome Hypocrie were it, to pretend to the minutest Decencies, and profess the highest Degrees of Nuptial Sanctity, and after all contract the indelible Stain, and perfidiously embrace such a *Dunghill* Lust? Take heed therefore of every impure and guilty Thought, of all unchast Desires and Complacences, lascivious Glances and Dalliances, of all Immodesty in Word or Gesture, with all other Incentives to gratifie the *Flesh* with its Affections and Lusts. These, besides their proper Guilt and Defilement, are the common *Anteludes* by which the sly Tempter seeks to play you into the dreadfull Crime: and then by shunning the Occasions of them you keep out  
of

of the road (at least) of vulgar Danger, in the pure *Aethereal* way, whether the *unclean Spirit* never or rarely presumes to come. But suppose you were surprized by a rude and violent Temptation (as *Joseph* or sad *Lucretia* was) Lusts fiery Darts will not enter into a chaste and undefiled Breast, where there is nothing gross enough to catch or feed the Flame. *Prov. 4. 23.* Keep therefore thy Heart with all Diligence; and if thine Eye chance to be struck with strange erratick Beauty, call in the mighty powers of Faith and Reason, arm your self with a Reverence of God's all-seeing eye, which pierceth into all your Paths, and is ever about your Bed; call to mind your infinite Obligations to him, and look on every Instigation of lustfull Appetite, as a dangerous Approach to the flaming borders of Hell and Ruin, where the Worm of Conscience dieth not, and the Fire of Divine Wrath is not quenched. Say now to thy self, How can I do so false, so foul an Action, that have plighted my Faith, and espoused my self by most solemn and religious Vows, as a chaste Virgin unto Christ, as a Lover of the purest and holiest Jesus? How can I hope to appear

appear before him amongst those *bright*  
and *spotless* Souls, that have escaped *Matth. 24.*  
*the Pollutions that are in the World* <sup>33.</sup>  
*through Lust?* May he not justly set  
me with the Goats on his left hand, in  
the great *discriminating* Day, if here I  
should live like them in *turpid* and *law-*  
*less* Pleasures? Should I stoop to this  
*lewd* Desire, *Whither, oh whither shall*  
*I cause my shame to go?* How shall I  
behold the Face of God or Angels? Is  
this to *purifie my self as they are pure?*  
Shall I *then* for a *moments* Pleasure for-  
feit an *immortal* Crown, and incur the  
*eternal* Anger of him whom at last I  
*must obey*, when he bids me *depart in-*  
*to everlasting Fire?* Shall I then less  
reason in my Conduct, be more *bru-*  
*tish than any Man*, and run directly up-  
on the *Rock* by whose *fatal side* I have  
lately seen the *Ruins* of so many *tall*  
and *gallant* Vessels, so many *brave* and  
*goodly* Persons, fearless and undaunted  
Men, with *desperate* Numbers of the  
*smaller Craft*, miserably *lost* and *cast*  
*away* for ever? And for those few *Ad-*  
*venturers* that have hardly escaped with  
*Life* and *Limb*, how have I seen them  
*stalking* about the *Streets like Ghosts*,  
with *Death* and *strange Remorse* in their

D

Faces?

Faces? Only more chang'd from what they were, than Death usually alters a man from his *living Form*?

I will say but one thing more; you have *Life* and *Death* before you; consider the various Issues of a *wife* and *foolish* Choice, declared by the *everlasting Gospel*, which forbids you no innocent Pleasure. *If you live after the Flesh, you shall die: but if through the Spirit you mortifie the Deeds of the Body, you shall live*, in ravishing and endless Joys, in eternal Acts of unspotted and *Seraphick* Love, in the Arms of him that loved you to the *Death*, in the *Beatific* Vision and Fruition of God, and the dearest Embraces of *Virgin Spirits made perfect in Heaven*. To which God of his infinite Mercy guide us through the Snares and Fallacies of this evil World, for the Merits of his Blessed Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

A  
S E R M O N  
ON THE  
*Christian Warfare.*

S. James IV. 7.

----- Resist the Devil, and he will  
flee from you.

**T**IS a peculiar Thought of a late conceited Philosopher, who loved to quarrel with the *best sense* of Mankind, that War is founded in Nature; or a Right (as he calls it) in every man, according to his power, to seize on every Mans Possessions, till he gives it away by Compact. The plain and naked Meaning of which Assertion is, That Power and Right are but one and the same thing in Nature; That all the dif-

ference between them arises from *positive Laws and Covenants*; That till such Laws and Covenants were made, no man was bound to his *good Behaviour* to his Neighbour; that to *oppress, ravish, and murder*, were once *fair and innocent Actions*, the harmless Effects of *Power*, pursuant to that *original Right*, which *fond Nature* gave the *stronger* to all the Delights and Possessions of the *weaker*. But not to follow the *Chace* of this *wild and impious Hypothesis*, we need go no farther than the Text to discover the great *Incendiary of War and Contention*, and the *first Cause and Author* of all Disorder and Confusion in the World; that is, *the Devil*, the common and inveterate Enemy of God, and every Creature that bears his *Image*. Him therefore *S. James* exhorts us to *resist*; and least we should be daunted at the *Fame* of his mighty *Conquests*, and the vast *Destructions* he hath every where wrought in the *Earth*, to support us under this Discouragement, *the Divine Herald* assures us, that the *Issue* of our Conflicts with him will be *safe and honourable*; that *Victory* shall always attend our *Arms*, and the *Flight* of our Enemy

Enemy adorn our Triumph. *Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.*

These Words deserve a very serious *Consultation* with our selves about them; especially when we *first* enter into the *Christian Warfare*, or when-ever we are *allarmed* by any *violent* Temptation, or are likely to be engag'd in any *sharp* encounter with our *Spiritual Adversary*. No wise Man begins a *War* without considering *who*, and *how* *powerfull* his Enemy is; what *play* he is like to have from him, and what *Force* he is able to advance against him; at least, if it be a *War* (as the *Christian* is) that will surely hold him *in breath* till he has breath'd his very *last* in this world. And this Wisdom *our Saviour* teaches his Followers, as a common instance of *military Prudence*, Luke 14. 31. *For what King going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?* where we see, the necessary points to be resolved before we enter into the *Field of Action* are, *What Forces* our Enemy is provided with, and *what power* we have to make good our *Defence* against him.

And since it is evident by our *Saviour's Argument*, that the success of our *Spiritual Warfare* depends upon the right and timely Resolution of these *weighty Questions*, and a competent Understanding of them is apparently *necessary* to such a Resolution, to make this Discourse the more clear and practical, I shall distinctly consider these three Particulars.

I. The *Strength* of our Enemy, and wherein his great *Power* to hurt us lies.

II. What *Power* we have to *resist* him, or by what means we may effectually guard and secure our selves against him.

III. What Assurance we have, that *the Devil* will yield to our Resistance, and *flee from us*.

I. The *Strength* of our Enemy, and wherein his great *Power* to hurt us lies. The *Fall* of the Apostate Angels from Heaven, has (by Divine Permission) fill'd this *lower World* with innumerable *envious* and *malicious* Spirits, under one *Sovereign Prince* or *Leader*, whom

whom the Scripture commonly calls *the Devil* or *Satan*. This is that *malignant* Spirit, who *first* (of his own wicked Motion) raised Rebellion in the calm and peacefull Regions of *Heaven* and *Paradise*, and has ever since made it his business to seduce and destroy the *Worshippers of God*, to draw the World to his own *Altars* and *Oracles*, and to put *all the Foundations of the Earth out of Course*. It is not at all improbable, that he beguiled our First Parents by appearing in the shape of a *Seraph* or *flaming Serpent*, in which they had seen the *Heavenly Seraphim* attending the *Divine Majesty*, when God was pleas'd to *shade himself with visible Glory*, and condescended to converse with *Man*. And tho' we know not the Devil's *particular Station* before his *Fall*, yet an Angel of some *superiour Order* in the celestial *Hierarchy* we may certainly conclude he had been, from his *ancient Supremacy* over the *Spirits of his own Kingdom*, and the great and eminent *Titles* by which he is frequently distinguisht in Scripture from them; such as *the Prince of the Devils*, *the Prince and the God of this World*, and *the Prince of the Power of the*

Numb. 21.

6.

Matth 9.

34.

Joh. 12. 31.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

Ephes. 2. 2.

*the Air*; the latter of which denotes also *the place* of his Habitation, or *the Camp* where his great Armies meet, and receive his Orders to *deceive the Nations*, and enlarge his Kingdom over this inferiour Orb. But whatever *his place*, or whatever his *Crime* in Heaven was, no sooner was he driven thence into the Regions of the Air, but like *the First-born of the Children of Pride and Malice*, he prepares to *revenge* his Fall upon the *Favourite* of the new *Creation*. And observing Man, the Off-spring of *Dust and Clay*, curiously wrought into a Creature of *surprizing Form*, dignified with the *Image* of God, and a *Majestick Awe* and *Authority* over all below him, he presently began to *envy* and *molest* his Happiness, and (which is all the happiness he hath reserved to himself) to *conspire* and *procure* his Ruin.

To carry on this *design* the Devil has vast *Legions* of *desperate* Spirits continually at his Beck and Pleasure; *All* delighting in the same Employment, *all* of them *fired* with the same Revenge, and involved in the same irreversibile Doom; *all* immortal and unbodied Spirits, and therefore *superiour* to our  
frail

frail humane Nature, which is but Spirit mingled and allayed with Flesh and Blood; and by the weak Contexture of its *unequal* Principles, and the *affinity* of our Bodies to the Elements of this World, is liable to the *Fallacies* and *Distractions* of sensual Objects, and so the easier to be imposed upon by the greater Craft and Sagacity of our *ghostly Adversaries*. For we must yield them the Pre-eminence in *all the powers* of Understanding and acting suitably to their Dispositions and Purposes. And as our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of this World are in* Luk. 16.8. *their Generation wiser than the Children of Light*; so the Spirits they are acted by, have doubtless a *sharper Insight* into the Nature of things than either of them, a *stronger Judgment* in the fitness and choice of Means, greater *Quickness* and *Dexterity* in their Applications to them, together with unwearied Vigour and Diligence, *animated* by a perfect and incurable Hatred of God and Goodness: Besides the vast Improvements *they* have made by long and *successfull* Practice in all the *Arts* of Ruin and Seduction.

But besides this *veterane Army* (in which

which not *one* of all the *Tribes* is *imiss-  
ing* since the *War* began) this *mighty  
Warriour* has innumerable *other Forces*  
and *Auxiliaries* to assault us with. The  
ill Men and Examples of the World,  
which make the far greatest *Figure* and  
*Party* in every Age, are all *entire* on  
his side. Yea, all that is called the  
*Wealth* and *Glory* of this World, the  
*blazing* Honours and Riches of it, its  
*stately* Pomp and Pageantry, attended  
with all the *Charms* of Wit, Beauty,  
Parentage, and Power (the *splendid  
Furniture* of Pride and Luxury) do  
readily contribute *their Service* to him,  
and *assist* his Instigations to *idolize* and  
*worship* them. Out of these *he weaves*  
his *silken* Snares, and forges his *golden*  
Chains; with *those* to entangle the  
careless and effeminate, and with *these*  
to lead the *Worldling* *Captive* at his  
*Will*. He also attempts to *beat us off*  
from the Paths of Piety and Vertue, with  
the *Frowns* of this *angry* and *supercili-  
ous* World: and when he finds us *stiff*  
and *resolute* in our Course, he com-  
monly sends whole *Follies* of Curses  
and Reproaches after us, *belcht* from  
the Mouths of his *impious Children*, on  
purpose to *lame* and obstruct our Pro-  
gress.

gress. Nay, what is *sadder* than all this, he opposes our *Salvation* with the *choicest* Blessings and Assistances, <sup>2 Cor. 12.</sup> we receive from Heaven, its *immediate* <sup>7.</sup> Inspirations and *divinest* Gifts; and has a *strange Art* in turning the *best Means* and *Overtures of Grace* to his own *malicious and destructive Purposes*; in making the word of *Life* a *savour of* <sup>2 Cor. 2.</sup> *Death*, and *blinding the Minds of them* <sup>16.</sup> *that believe not*, least the *Light of the* <sup>2 Cor. 4.</sup> *glorious Gospel of Christ*, who is the *image of God*, should shine unto them. And when with all his *Powers of Dark-ness* he cannot *extinguish* this glorious *Light*, he sets up *new Lights* and *apish Revelations* against it, to *dazle* the minds of *ignorant and unstable Persons*, while he *winds* them into his *Interests*, and through a *Mist of obscure*, and a *Maze of wild and intricate Doctrines*, leads them into *damnable Er-* <sup>2 Pet. 2.1.</sup> *rors*, by which (as *St. Peter* speaks) *they bring upon themselves swift Destruction.*

I might add, that this *subtile Enemy* of ours frequently *plays* upon us from our *own Castles in the Air*; our *vain Imaginations* and *foolish Fancies*, our *high Conceits of our own Gifts*, and  
Attain-

Attainments, our *Ambitious* and *towering* Hopes of earthly *Grandeur* and *Felicity*, with all the *enchanting* Delights and Gayeties of an *Utopian Paradise*; our vexatious Fears of *merely contingent* or *improbable* Accidents, our *groundless* Confidence and Security in all the *Flatteries* of a sinfull course, and (be that never so long or sinfull) our *fallacious* reckoning on a *Death-Bed* Repentance after it.

The Truth is, the main Strength and Interest of *Satan* lies in *our selves*; in our weak and shallow Judgment of Things, and disorderly Wills and Affections towards them. Our Understandings are easily *misled* with the *Glare* of sensible Objects; and the Lusts which war in our Members, against the Dictates of our Reason and Conscience, are a *strong Party* on the Enemies side, ready on every Instigation of *his* to *challenge* their lawless Liberties, and to betray our Souls into his *merciless* hands. And this has been a growing *Accession* to the power of *Satan* ever since the Defection of our first Parents; he has gain'd all the ground that we lost by our fall, and has so many *Confederate Lusts* in all the

the *weak* parts of our Nature, that where-ever almost he chuses to assault us, he is sure to find a *well-affected Party* within our selves, to promote his banefull and malicious Designs upon us. To this end *he* is very exact in observing our *Complexions, Educations, and Customs*, out of which he easily *spells* our Inclinations, and then applies his Temptations to our particular *Likings* and *Aversions*; and so follows *Nature* in the way she is most dispos'd to *wander* and *prevaricate* in. This is a signal Instance of the fatal Craft and Sagacity of our Enemy, to which I will only add two or three remarkable Advantages the Devil has to ripen his dark Designs, and accomplish his wicked and destructive Projects. The first is,

1. The silence of his Attacks, which he usually begins and carries on without the least *Noise* or *Signal of War*, when he is minded to do us the greatest Mischief. For tho' his Motions are sometimes *rapid* and *furios*, as when he raises a *Storm* of Persecution in the Church; yet generally speaking, they are so very *soft* and *insensible*, that without a strict and mighty Care, 'tis hardly

hardly possible to discern them from  
 Luk. 9. 55. the Motions of our *own*, or (in all cases) from the *placid* and *gentle* Breathings of the *Divine Spirit*. So that commonly the *War* is begun before ever we are *aware* of our Enemy; and the Devil is *busie* with us while he is *farthest* from our Thoughts, and we think of nothing less than of serving his Designs and Interests; nay it may be, while we think *the contrary*, and are *verily perswaded* we are  
 Acts 26. 9. *doing God Service*. And thus he at  
 Joh. 16. 2. once conceals his Enmity to us, flatters our Infirmities, and pleases our Fancies, prevents our Vigilance, animates his *own Party* within us, sets the Battle in *array*, and many times *steals the Victory*, before we have any *Mistrust* or *Intimation* of his *tampering* with us, or the least warning from *him* to put our selves into a *Posture of Defence* against him.

2. His restless and indefatigable Diligence in laying his *Snares*, contriving *new* Plots and Devices, and improving all Accidents and Advantages to compass his pernicious Purposes. He is continually *going to and fro in the Earth*, and *walking up and down in it* :

Job 1. 7.

Tra.

Traversing all the ways that go down to Hell, or lead up to Heaven, and beating out untrodden and nearer Paths to ruin, than Man himself (left to his own happier Ignorance) could possibly have devised to his own Destruction. He is never weary of ill-doing, he is always moving and coasting about, intruding into all Places and Companies, listening to every Word, and prying into every Corner, to spy out opportunities of hatching Mischief. This is his manner of Life: and in this Posture St. Peter describes him, 1 Pet. 5. 8. *Your Adversary the Devil as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* No Place, not Paradise it self; no Person, not the purer Son of God, could escape him. The Sanctuary is no priviledg'd Place; the Society of our Blessed Saviour on Earth, no certain Defence to his domestick and best-beloved Disciples; the miraculous Gift of the Holy Ghost, which cast the Devil out of his miserable Vassals, could not secure the Enjoyer from his Assaults and Treacheries. His Temptations are common to Men, even the devoutest Votaries at the Throne of Grace; nor does the special Presence of God

Mar. 8. 33.

2 Cor. 12.

7.  
1 Cor. 10.

13.

Job 1. 6. God in the place where his Honour dwelleth, always protect us from this insolent Intruder into his holy Assemblies. In short he is so impudent as to accuse the Children of God before him, and renew his Encounters after the most shamefull Baffles; yea, so maliciously bent upon our Destruction, that he tugs at it Night and Day, sullies our Dreams, and defiles our Recreations, perplexes our Business, and distracts our Devotions; a thousand Snares he lays about our Tables and our Beds; neither allowing himself nor us any rest, till he either despairs of Success, or glories in our ruin.

3. His great Artifice in deceiving us with false Appearances, and raising our Expectations of delicious Pleasures and Profits from extremely bitter and losing Practices. He has a wonderfull Art in laying beautifull Colours on the most deformed and pernicious Actions, and hiding the Sting while we tast the Sweet of his disguised Dainties. This is indeed his sovereign and most successfull Policy, to amuse our Minds with Images of things which are not, and entertain our Fancies with gay and winning Objects  
all

all the way he is leading us to ruin. By this *Decoy* he draws off our Attention from the *Truth* and *Reality* of things; and so leaves us to embrace the *Shadows*, and rue the consequence of our Folly and Rashness. I will not undertake to determine how far the Devil is chargeable with the Crimes which he tempts us to; but this I doubt not may be truly said, That whenever we are strongly tempted to any Action which in cool thoughts we know to be vile and hatefull, and (perhaps) would not do to purchase the greatest Temporal Good, the Devil by mysterious Craft, and sly Impressions on our Animal Spirits, raises such fair and charming Ideas of it; as insensibly alter our opinion of the dreadful Act, gradually subdue our Aversions to it, and at last (if not prevented by severer Reflections) assuredly gain our Consent to the Commission of it.

Thus you have seen your Enemy at the head of his mighty Armies, with his wonderfull Train of Artillery about him, posted on the higher ground, superiour to you both in power and policy, tall and terrible as the Anakims, flushed with Victory, and possessed of

E many

many strong Holds and enchanted Castles: full of Treachery and Malice; close and secret in his Motions, while he pushes on his Designs with a restless and fatal Diligence, and in a most perfidious and cruel manner seeks to play you into ruin, to make you the Instruments, and to please you in the methods of your own Destruction.

After all, our comfort is, that this great and formidable power of the evil Spirit is ever under the check of a superiour and infinite Power, so that it cannot exert it self farther than God is pleas'd to permit it; the Bounds of whose Permissions are discoverable only by his Word and Promises, of which there may be a fitter occasion to speak hereafter.

And now having view'd the strength, and detected the Dispositions and Motions of this potent and terrible Enemy, let us turn the Perspective, and consider,

II. What Power we have to resist the Devil, and by what means we may effectually secure our selves against him. That the Devil is no irresistible Enemy,

Enemy, is as clear as that we are both commanded and encouraged to resist him. For to what purpose were it to encounter with *invincible* Power? Or what hope of an Enemy's *flying from us*, that hath *Victory it self* at his Command and Pleasure? If we must *sink* under his Power, serve only to glorifie his *Triumphs*, to furnish him with *malicious Joy*, and be dragg'd at his *Chariot Wheels*, as the wretched *Captives* of his Wiles and Fallacies, why should we struggle any longer, or think to break the *Adamantine Chains* of our Fate and Misery? In vain are all good and pious *Endeavours* towards the recovery of our *degenerate* Nature into a state of Virtue and Perfection, if *the Enemy* of all that is good and vir-  
tuous hath an absolute and uncontrollable *Power* to interrupt and stifle them. And so all the *Motives* of the Gospel would be *mere Flain* and *Mockery* without the Promise of an *Assistance equal* to the Difficulties of our Spiritual Combats; And had God denied us that Assistance, and for ever abandon'd us to the *Malice* and *Tyranny* of evil Spirits, there could have been no room for a *Covenant of Grace*; nothing but

a fearfull looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation to devour us. Again, why are we baptized in the Name of Jesus, if there be none to save us? No escape from the everlasting Chains prepared for the Devil and his Angels? And how is it possible to love that Being with all my Heart, and adore him with all my Soul (be his Power and Majesty never so immense) that should let Hell and Destruction loose upon me, when I have no more power to resist them, than when I lay in my Swallowing-Bands, helpless and innocent of all actual Crimes? To bring both Extremes of a Contradiction together, or do that which in the nature of it can never be done, is more than Infinite Power it self can do; and therefore Infinite Wisdom and Goodness cannot require it of frail and finite Creatures, especially under an Infinite Penalty. And since it is plainly impossible to withstand irresistible Power, it can be no less than an Infinite Absurdity to suppose the Enemy of our Salvation to be irresistible.

'Tis true, there are considerable odds between the powers of the Angelical and Humane Nature, especially  
since

since we are so much *shatter'd* by our Fall, and have lost so much of the *Vigour* and *Bravery* of our Primitive Faculties; but this only proves, that we are no *equal Match* to our Adversary in *single Combat*, and that we stand in need of *better Powers* than our own to fight our way through the many *Dangers* and *Difficulties* of our Christian Warfare; and this I easily grant. But then it is certain, that the *Christian* is, in the Nature of it, a *Confederate War*; that *Heaven* it self espouses our Cause, and that we still retain those *noble* and *excellent* Faculties, which being *animated* and *supported* by Divine Assistance, and *duely exercised* according to the *Christian Discipline*, are at least sufficient to defend us against the utmost *Efforts* and *Attempts* of Hell. This is the *true state* of the *War* betwixt us and our *invisible* Adversary; for the clearer Understanding of which, I shall shew these three things.

I. That to resist the Devil is only to withstand his Temptations.

II. That we are not destitute of sufficient Powers and Assistances (if we

are not wanting to our selves) to withstand the Assaults and Temptations of the Devil.

III. By what means we may effectually resist them.

I. For the First, To resist the Devil is only to *withstand* his *Temptations*, and oppose his crafty and malicious Endeavours to betray us into Sin and Misery. He has indeed *no other way* to assault and hurt our Souls, than by *tempting* them to evil; I mean, as long as we are in a *state of Tryal*, and are not *judicially* delivered up to his Rage and Fury. And therefore our *only way* to resist him, is to foil his *Temptations*, and take *effectual* Care that he does not *fasten* any of his Fallacies or Delusions upon us. For 'tis evident, while we are under the *Influence* and *Conduct* of Divine Grace, that the Devil neither does nor can act *immediately* upon our *Wills*, or force us to do his pleasure by any *physical determining* Power, whatever he may do with those *miserable Wretches* whom God hath *forsaken*, and turn'd over to this *dire Executioner* of his Wrath and Vengeance.

ance. He has leave indeed to bring us to our Tryal, and the Decision of the grand Controversie, whether we will chuse to be subject to God or him; but then our very Tryal supposes, that we are not liable to any compulsive or determining Power, during the whole Protests of it, but are left to our Liberty to chase whom we will serve, and which of the two contrary Masters we will love and cleave unto. For it would be a strange Tryal to put men upon Difficulties, that cannot stir the least Finger to remove them; and when I throw up a Stone into the Air, I might as well and wisely charge it to lodge itself in the Clouds, and not obey the Laws of Gravity, or return (as Nature bids it) to the Bosom of its beloved Center, as suppose God hath obliged me to encounter an Enemy, whose Power I am forced to obey, who drags and determines my Will which way soever he pleases, and leads me about in Triumph, without the least Ability to resist him, or dispute his Pleasure.

But more than this, the Temptations of the Devil are as great a Demonstration as we can desire, that he himself is conscious of his Impotency to force and

constrain our *Wills*, and that he has no *direct* and *infallible* way to deceive and ruin us. For if he has, why does he use so much *Art* and *Insinuation* with us, which often fail of the end they are used for? Would so *malignant* an Adversary go about, as he does, to *charm* us with tempting Objects, and *court* us with a thousand *Gauds* and *Flatteries* to a wicked Action, while he has Power enough in his hand to *compell* us to it, and knows a much *surer* and *shorter* way to execute his pernicious Designs upon us? If his power was not *inferiour* to his *Malice*, an Enemy so utterly destituted of all Goodness, would certainly make us feel the dismal Effects of it without Mercy or Delay, and not put it to our *Choice*, or leave it to a Trial of Ingenuity, to comply with him or not. Could he *twine* and *bend* our Wills as he pleases, and *elicit* what kind of Acts he is most delighted and gratified with, he would surely never suffer us to *refuse the evil*, or to *chuse the good*. However, 'tis in vain for us to *resist* the power that can *determine* our Wills: and because it is so, and we are expressly commanded to *resist the Devil*, we may

may be sure he has no such power, and then it can be no part of our Duty to resist it.

The meaning therefore of our *Resistance* must be, that we resolutely oppose the *Temptations* of the Devil: whether they come *immediately* from himself, or from any of his *inspired* Agents or Instruments, whether by way of *external* Representation, *vocal* Suggestion, or *Argument* (with all which he at once accosted our Saviour) or by secret *Strokes* and *inward* Matth. 4. 1, 2, &c.

*Impressions* upon our Imaginations and Fancies, whereby he assists the *natural* *Rhetorick* of outward Objects, and supplies their *Absence* by their *Ideas* and *Pictures*. And here he commonly shews the *fineness* of his Art, by retaining the *Likeness*, while he improves the *Graces* and *Deformities* of Things, according to his Design to inflame our *Affections*, or to raise our *Aversions* to them. 'Tis beyond our Conception what *variety* of Methods and *Occasions* he takes to *beguile* and supplant our Souls; and *particularly* what Advantage he makes of our *Animal Spirits* for the framing of those little *Cupids* and *Images*, which seem to play  
without

without Design in our Fancies, but are often managed and prepared by him on purpose to entertain our Minds with vain and idle Speculations, to solicit our corrupt Affections, to distract our purer Thoughts, and obstruct our most serious and important Endeavours. But tho' we cannot pry into all the curious Arts and Mysteries of this invisible Tempter, or tell exactly how he mixes and lays his Colours upon the Tablet of our Fancies, yet a carefull Observer of the Impressions they make upon his Thoughts and Passions, may plainly discern the Artist by certain inevitable Strokes and Lineaments, which distinguish almost all his Pieces, and which no other Genius than himself can reach: As David discovered the hand of Jeah in the sly and crafty Carriage of his Familiar of Tokuah.

2 Sam. 14.  
19.

For instance, whenever we find our Inclinations or Passions rushing against the Convictions of our Duty, and clashing with the best Principles of our Reason and Conscience: when we feel something within us prompting us to break a Divine Commandment, in view of the glittering Vengeance that hangs directly over the Transgressors of

of it: when the Bias of our Minds, after it was *rightly* set, suddenly turns the quite *contrary* way; or our Thoughts are *roving* in the midst of our *Devotions* after *secular* and *impertinent* Objects, or *bewildred* in a *Maze* of *vain* and *distracting* Imaginations: When we hate to think, or have the Confidence to *resist* the clearest *Evidence* of Truth, and are angry with the *Lights* for detecting our *Follies*; in these and many other *Instances* we may certainly know that we are *tempted* of the *Devil*; that *now* the evil Spirit is *busy* with us, and *he that betrayeth us is as hand*. Of this, I say, we may be very certain, because such *Impulses* and *Disorders* in our Spirits do *apparently* promote the *Designs* of *Satan*, and can serve *no other* Interests than *his*; because they are every way like *him*, and carry his very *Mark* and *Image* in their *Foreheads*, exactly answering the *Mein* and *Character* by which the holy Oracles of God have describ'd him to us. And *now* is our time and duty to *resist* him, to break his *Measures*, and defeat his *Temptations* and *Charms*, to stand upon the *Freedom* and *Dignity* of our Nature, and the

Honour

Ephes. 4.  
27.

*Honour* of our Christian Profession, and not yield to any of his *Instigations* or *Flatteries*; *i. e.* not give place to the Devil by complying with them, as St. Paul interprets St. James's meaning by resisting him.

II. We are not destitute of sufficient Powers and Assistances (if we are not wanting to our selves) to withstand the Assaults and Temptations of the Devil. For

I. We have all the *Natural* Faculties that are requisite to resist Temptations. We neither want a Power of *discerning between good and evil*, or of knowing what we ought to *avoid*, and what to *chuse* and *practise*; neither can we pretend that we have no power to make a right *Choice* or *Refusal*; for that were to say we are no *reasonable* Creatures, the proper use of *Reason* being only to direct our *Choice*, and to govern our Actions aright in relation to it. And therefore a *wise* and *good* Creator could never make us *reasonable*, without making us *free Agents*; and if we were not so, there would be no *occasion* for resisting Temptations, since none but a *free Agent* is *capable* of being assaulted by them. All  
Temptations

Temptations are *levelled* against the right use of our *Freedom*; and the *only* use the Tempter makes of them, is to *betray* our Wills, and *abuse* our Liberty by them; which shews that he cannot fasten any *guilt* upon us *against* our Wills, and that the *utmost* he can do, is to *solicit*, *excite*, and *cheat* us (if we *will* be cheated by *insel* and *faithless* Promises) into a *fatal* Compliance with his Methods of Ruin and Destruction. I say, if we *will* be cheated, for there is no Necessity that we should; our *Freedom* is our own by a *natural* Right, and the exercise of it is so *essential* to our present state of *Trial* and *Probation*, that there is no Fear, if we believe a *Providence* over us, that our Enemy (were it in his Power) should be permitted to *wrest* it from us. All the Fear is of our *selves*, lest we should *unhappily* use our Freedom, and by an *awkard* and *unnatural* Abuse of it enslave our *imperial* Faculties to sensual and *Diabolical* Lusts, and so for ever make our selves miserable by it. We are safe in the hottest *Battles* and *Encounters* of our *Spiritual* Adversaries, so long as we are *true* and *faithfull* to the *Rights* and *Interests*

*Interests of our Rational Nature, i. e. so long as we judge nothing but what is right, and choose nothing but what is virtuous and good.*

Neither can we complain that we have no power to correct the *Levity* of our Thoughts and Fancies, or to order and regulate our outward Actions. There is nothing so free as Thought, or more evident than that the Mind of Man has power within it self to shift the Scene of its Contemplations, and divert from one Imagination to another, as often as it pleases. A man may think of Hell when he is tempted, and of the all-seeing Eye before he ventures upon unchast Embraces. And so the Organs of Sense and Motion, the immediate Causes of outward Actions, are very much in our Power: and by guarding these Inlets of Lust and Vanity, we certainly avoid the strongest and most dangerous Temptations to Sin and Folly, help to starve our inbred Corruptions, and cut off all Communication with the Enemy, that is so much concern'd to relieve and cherish them. And these are all the Natural Faculties which are requisite to defend and secure us against Temptations.

2. We

2. We may be sure of all the *super-natural Aids and Assurances*, which are necessary to enable us to make a vigorous and effectual *Resistance*. For since we are so much *weakened* by our Fall, and by indulging our *carnal and corrupt Affections* have extremely spoil'd the *natural Tone and Ristitude* of our Faculties, 'tis apparent that we are never likely of our selves (i. e. merely by our own Strength and Constancy) to stand the *mighty Shock* of Temptations, which at every turn of our Lives and Fortunes are ready to assault us: and that the Grace of God is as *necessary* to animate and enforce our Endeavours, as our Resistance is to baffle and overcome the Temptations we are assaulted with. Now, as in Reason we may hope, that God will not refuse to assist us against the *impious Power and Tyranny of Satan*, in Vindication of his *undoubted Right and Title* to our Service: so to raise our *Confidence* in him he has expressly declared, that his Grace is *sufficient for us*, yea, to make us *more than Conquerors*: 2 Cor. 12: that he will give his *holy Spirit* to them that ask it, and hath sent his own Son from Heaven on purpose to destroy the

2 Cor. 12:  
Rom. 8:37.  
Luk. 11:13.  
1 Joh. 3:8.

Works

*Works of the Devil.* To this end *the Captain of our Salvation* sent forth his *Heralds* into the World, set up his *Standard*, and displayed his *Banners* to the Nations, appointing all that came to him, or that should believe in his Name, to be listed into one Army, or Church Militant on Earth, under the Conduct of such Generals and Officers as should receive a Commission from him, Under the Broad Seal of Heaven [As my Father hath sent me, so send I you, John 20. 21.] Then, to animate his Followers, he enter'd the Lists with the Prince of Darknest, by dying vanquisht all-conquering Death, and having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them by his glorious Resurrection.

Now these are the highest Assurances we can have, that God hath taken us into his holy Protection, and that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our ability: but will (according to his Promise) when we are beset with any Temptation, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Which implies, that his Providence watches over the Motions of our Enemies, that they

1 Cor. 10.  
13.

they are dispos'd to tempt us *above* our Strength, and that he hath set them their *Bounds* which they cannot pass, *viz.* that *Measure* of Strength which he is alwaies ready to supply us with; and then it must be our own fault if we don't make a happy End of this *sharp* and *tedious* War, and follow our glorious Leader into endless Triumphs. 'Tis true, that all the Promises of *victorious* Grace depend upon our earnest Prayers and Endeavours to acquit our selves like *Good Souldiers of Jesus Christ*: But surely, if we may have *Grace* for *Asking*, and *Victory* for *Fighting* for it, we cannot desire either upon *easier* Terms: For now all we *Want* falls within the *verge* of our Power, and if we lose the Victory we know who to thank for it. *The Spirit that is in us is greater* (saith St. John) *than he that is in the World*: And 1 Joh. 4. 4. while we keep him on our side we may Justly Glory in this *Happy Confederacy*, by virtue of which *we can do all things*, that *Omnipotency* it self, guided by Infinite Wisdom, can do for us. I come now to shew,

3. By what means we may effectually resist the Assaults and Temptations

F

of

of the Devil. It was an Infinite *Con-*  
*descension* in God to offer us an *Alli-*  
*ance* by the Mediation of his Son, when  
 our Impotency was the *meer* effect of  
 our Folly and Enmity to him. And as  
 in this respect we have all imaginable  
 Reason to adore the Divine Goodness  
 towards us, so it is our apparent Inte-  
 rest and Policy to embrace the *Terms*,  
 and observe the *Orders* our great Patron  
 and Ally hath prescribed to us. And  
 the rather because there is a *Mighty*  
*Noise* and *Combustion* in the World,  
 which *Serves* the Devil under the spe-  
 cious pretence of *Resisting* him. There  
 are those that inveigh heartily against  
 him ( whose *Ill Word* he does not  
 much value ) and with *Armed Zeal*  
 and Orthodoxy lay about them at a  
 wonderful rate, as if they would drive  
 all the *Powers of Darknes* before them,  
 and carry their Conquests to the very  
*Gates of Destruction*: Like that foolish  
 People in *Caria*, of whom the Historian  
 reports, that to drive away their *strange*  
*Gods*, they *Arm'd* themselves, and went  
 up in *Battel-array* to the Bordering  
 Mountains, *beat* and *stab'd* the Air  
 with their *Doughty Weapons*, and to  
 Crown so brave an Act of *Defiance* pro-  
 claimed

Kαὶ οὕτως α.  
 παρ' Ἡεροδ.  
 Hist. lib. 1.  
 p. 71, 72.

claimed the Banishment of those Intruding Deities. *Spiritual Wickednesses* Eph 6.12. are not to be quell'd with *Martial Force*, or with *Giddy and Popular Tumults*: They *laugh* (like the *Leviathan* Job 41.29. in *Job*) at the shaking of the *Spear*, and are never better pleased than to see Men Tilting with *Luciferian Pride* and *Fierceness* at one anothers Follies and Opinions, quarrelling with every thing they Dislike in Others, and mistaking the true seat of War, which certainly is in every man's *Breast*, and will find him work enough while there is a *Devil* to tempt him, or but one Treacherous and Unmortified *Lust* within him. And no less Absurd and Ridiculous is it, to encounter the *Devil* with senseless and hideous *Forms* of Words, *Spells*, and other *Magical Rites*: Or to Accost him with such *Wooden Artillery* as the *Romish Exorcists* use, and ascribe a Divine Efficacy to, I mean their *Reliques*, *Incense*, *Consecrated Salt*, *Holy Water*, *Breathings* and *Crossings*, and what they call the *Chrism of Salvation*. The true Weapons and Methods of our *Spiritual Conflicts* are extremely different from these, and all Modern Inventions of *Superstitious* and *Fanciful Men*: and

indeed deserve a much larger Discourse than the remaining Minutes will allow, which will therefore oblige me to speak the more briefly of them. The first is

1. A true and lively Faith in all the great Articles of the Christian Doctrin. Faith is the *Principle* of all *Spiritual Life and Operations*, and therefore the *Power* of all other Graces is virtually contained in it; the Consequence of which is, that the Christians Power to resist the Temptations of the Devil is exactly equal to the *Measure* and *Energy* of his Faith. And hence S. Paul expressly calls the Christian Life *the Good Fight of Faith*; and gives the Preeminence to this Grace above all the *Weapons* of our Spiritual Warfare, *Ephes. 6. 16. Above all take the shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked.*

1 Joh. 5. 4. And *This* (saith St. John) *is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* And a noble Victory it is, beyond any the *World* it self ever saw, since it reaches even *Him* who is call'd *the God of this World*: For the World is the *Great Magazine* of Temptations, out of which the Devil has all along  
furnisht

1 Tim. 6.  
12.

furnisht himself with the choicest Materials for his *Wicked War*. Besides, to *Overcome the World*, is to *Subdue* and *Mortifie* our Inordinate Affections to it; and when they are *Dead*, the Glories and Vanities of this World will affect us no more than the *Flowers* that are strewed upon our *Graves*, or the sad *Pomp* and *Solemnities* that attend us thither. We shall then have no Lusts to gratify, being *Dead* to this World, and *living* upon the *Faith* and expectation of a *Better*: and then it will be no longer in the Tempter's Power to *Gull* us with his *Gilded Toys* and *next-to-nothings*: with his *Fairie Money*, and *Phantastick Braveries*, with his *Crackling* and *Blazing Honours*, or the *Guilty* and *Gripping Pleasures* with which he *liberally Rewards* his *Fools* and *Properties*. *The Evidence of things not seen*, which is the Life and Essence of our *Faith*, will give us such a Prospect of *Celestial Glory* and Happiness, as will raise our Spirits to the Noblest Heights, and darken all the *Splendor* and *Gayety* of this Tempting Life: It will also inspire us with *Invincible Fortitude* in the sharpest *Fight of Afflictions*, while we *look unto Jesus the Au-*

Heb. 11.1.

Heb. 10. 32.

Heb. 12.2.

thor and Finisher of our Faith, and learn of him, for the Joy that is set before us, to endure the Crosses, and despise the Shame and Reproaches of this Angry and Virulent World. So that by Overcoming the World, i. e. Mortifying our Affections to it by a lively Faith in God and our Redeemer, we spoil the Tempter's Designs, drive the Enemy out of his Head Quarters, nail up his Murdering Cannon, and render all his Great Engines of War utterly useless and unserviceable against us.

2. Frequent Application to God by Devout and Fervent Prayers to preserve us from the Danger, and assist us in the hour of Temptation. To this Relief we are directed by our Saviour, who taught his Disciples to Pray, that they might not be led, and that they

Luk. 11. 4. they might not enter into Temptation: The  
22. 40. meaning of which could not be, that we should beg the Favour of God to be wholly exempted from all Spiritual Trials, or desire a clear and absolute Discharge from the Christian War: For that were to Pray against some of the best Means for Implanting, Exercising and Improving Grace, and against all Occasions of Victory and Triumph, and

to

to prescribe a *new Method* and *Dispensation* to God for the Training us up to Eternal Life and Glory, contrary to that which his other Children have been *always* accusom'd to. Our Saviour's meaning therefore must be, that whereas in our present Circumstances we are *surrounded* with innumerable and sore Temptations, we should pray to our Heavenly Father to *Relieve* us, and not suffer us to be *Over-power'd*, or to enter too far into the *Danger* of being worsted by them. And this is so much our *Interest*, that were there no shadow of *Duty* or *Piety* in it, one would think a Sensible Man should not need any other Incentive to it. For is it not an *Inestimable* Privilege, that my *Safety* lies in one that commands all the *Powers* of Nature, and the Angels of *Light* and *Darkness*, and has promised that nothing shall *tempt me above my Power*? As it is impossible any thing should, if I will make *his* Power *mine*, which by humble and fervent Prayer I am sure to do; and since my Prayer can reach him every moment, shall I wave *his* Defence, vainly rely on my *own* Strength (at which my Enemy laughs) and venture

alone into the Battel amidst all the mighty *Darts* and *Fire* of Hell, and thereby lose an *Immortal* Soul, and with it a *Victory* so easie to be gain'd, over which there hangs an *Eternal* Crown? Such Presumption as this is the highest Provocation to Almighty God to forsake us in our greatest Extremities, while we carry it as if we would *Steal* a Victory without him, or tamely give place to the Devil, rather than be obliged to *Him* for it.

3. Good Principles of Life and Practice are an admirable Fence and Preservative against Temptations. These, like the *Ballast* in the Ship, will keep the Soul *Tight* and *Steady* while the Man is *Floating* on the Waves, driven by the Angry Winds, and toss'd by the Changes and Accidents of the *Fickle* and *Tempestuous* World. Thus, we see, in all the *Whirlings* and *Revolutions* of State, as well as those of a private Fortune, 'tis the Man of Principles still, 'Avne *τελεκων* (as *Aristotle* calls him) the solid *square* Man, who has a *basis* of Integrity on every side, that bravely Out-rides the *Storm*, and smiles at the Dangers which loudly *Threaten* him. And for those *becalming* Temptations

tations which lie in *Pleasure* and *Sensuality*, a Man that has settled his course of Life the contrary way, that steers by *Wise* and *Vertuous* Principles, is in very little danger of coming within the reach of their Allurements and Charms. Having found the *Pleasantness* of Religion, and *tasted the Delights of the World to come*, he is prepared against the Temptations of *this*: He knows better things than to act against his *Best Judgment*, *Experience* and *Interest*, than to forego his Innocence, to *Ruffle* his peacefull Mind, and forfeit the Love and Favour of God, only to enjoy the short Pleasures of *Sense*, which the *Meanest Soul* in the World could never find any competent Satisfaction in. And hence it is *Remarkable*, that Good Men are no less the *Wonders* of the World, when through Surprise or Inadvertency they *fall into the Snare of the Devil*, than when they *nobly withstand* the greatest Temptations, and *maintain* their Integrity without any *visible* support besides it.

4. A Right Understanding of the *Wiles* and *Stratagems* of Satan. 'Tis no unusual thing with him, since *Life* and *Immortality* are brought to Light  
by

2 Cor. 2. 11. by the Gospel, to transform himself into an Angel of Light, and play the Devil under the Prophet's Mantle; to delude poor Ignorant Souls with Counterfeit Miracles and Prophecies, Corrupt Glosses and Interpretations of Scripture, and wondrous shews of Sanctity and Self-denial, beyond the line of Mortality, and the utmost stretch and possibility of Humane Frailty. Too often he betrays Men of Rare and Lively Phancies into Novel and Fond Conceits, to the apparent and mighty Prejudice of Truth and Piety, and the ensnaring of some of the most Passionate Lovers of the Beauties of Holiness. By varnishing Old exploded Errors with New Phrases and Fallacies, he recommends them for New and Choice Discoveries of Gospel Truths: And when he is most intent on disturbing the Peace and Harmony of the Church, he commonly adds some Immunities and Favours of his Own to the Royal Charter of Christian Liberty; for the Currency of which he Inspires his Ministers with Invincible Assurance, and with Unfortunate Arts of Insinuation and Eloquence.

With

With these and other specious Devices does the Devil play upon the Ignorance of many that warmly profess the Gospel, and under colour of Resisting him and his Doctrines engage them against the Life and Power of Godliness. It concerns us therefore to be acquainted with his Methods, and to Match his Policies, by furnishing our selves with the Wisdom which is from above, of which the Holy Scriptures are a most Rich and Invaluable Treasury. By the Light of this Sacred Lamp we may both discover the Tremendous Depths of Satan, and the certain way to Countermine and Defeat them. Here we have a safe and ample Prospect of all the chief Battels that were fought for several thousand years, between the Greatest Worthies and Champions of former Ages, and this All-defying Enemy of theirs, together with the Good and Ill Conduct, and the various Successes and Occurrences on either side. Here we read of the famous Tryal of Skill in the Land of Uz; of the Prodigious Slaughter of a False-hearted Army in the Wilderness, without a visible Enemy; of many Noble and Heroic Actions of Patriarchs, Prophets and

Job. 11, 12.  
Numb. 26.  
65.

and *Apostles*, and other *Excellent Men*, not without some deplorable Mixtures of *sinfull Failings*, purposely written for our *Admonition*. Interwoven with these Relations we every where meet with the *Wiles* and *Stratagems*, the *Windings* and *Fallacies* of the *old Serpent*: the diligent Observation of which, added to the skill we have purchas'd by dear Experience, or at easie Rates may be gain'd by the Follies and Misadventures of others, will be so much *Spiritual Armour*, and ward off many *deadly* and *surprizing* Strokes from our *ever-waking* and *intriguing* Enemy. For what is easier, when we see the *Train*, than to avoid the *Blow*?

Prov. 1. 17. *In vain* (saith Solomon) *is the Net spread in the sight of any Bird.*

5. Vigilance and Sobriety are also necessary to defeat the Policies and Delusions of Satan. If we have not a *Presence of Mind* to discern an *approaching* Danger, if we *sleep over* our opportunities of *resisting*, like King Saul and his *careless* General, in useles Armour while their *Bolsters* were deckt and guarded with *glittering Weapons*, 'tis no wonder if our *watchfull Adversary* invade us when we least expect him;  
deride

1 Sam. 26.  
12, 15.

*deride* our Sloth and Folly, and *steal*  
 away the *Arms* that should defend us  
 from him. The Devil is as *subtle* and  
*circumspect* as he is malicious, and  
 doubtless gets a great deal more by  
*surprizing* us, than by all his *fair Bat-*  
*tles* and *formal* Encounters with us.  
 He cares not much to assault us when  
 he sees we are *prepared* for him: and  
 were it not to *keep his hand in*, or that  
 he hopes to tire us out with *watching*  
 and *observing* his Motions, with send-  
 ing *so often* to Heaven, and waiting  
*so long* (as becomes us) for Relief a-  
 gainst him, he would surely never  
 trouble us with so many *frivolous* and  
*forlorn* Temptations, as he frequently  
 does. It concerns us therefore (as we  
 are often warn'd) to be very cautious  
 of our *wakefull* Enemy, to *watch lest*  
*we enter into Temptation*, and to be so-  
*ber* that we may be *vigilant*; to take <sup>41.</sup> Matth. 26.  
*heed lest our Hearts be over-charg'd* <sup>1 Pet. 5.8.</sup>  
*with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and* <sup>Luke 21.</sup>  
*the cares of this life, and so the evil*  
*day, and the evil Spirit, come upon us*  
*unawares.* For, alas! what *Resistance*  
 are we like to make, while we *stagger*  
 with Wine? While our our *Spirits* are  
*dissolved* in Luxury and Pleasure, our  
 Hands

*Hands bound with Multiplicity of Business, and our Hearts disquieted and broken with the vexatious Pursuits and Distractions of this present evil World?*

6. Lastly, Industry and Faithfulness in our Callings are great Securities against the Baits and Temptations of the Devil. The wise and good Providence of God hath so *happily* ordered our Affairs in this World, that there is really more satisfaction and pleasantness in an *active and virtuous* course than was ever found in all the *envied State* of the most *splendidly* idle and unprofitable Life. And methinks this *Argument* alone should be enough to convince an observing *Atheist*, that Infinite Wisdom sits at the *Stern* of the World; since he cannot but perceive that the *least honourable and most toilsome* Employments (which are most *necessary* to the welfare of Mankind) are delicious *Sport and Recreation* to the patient Labourer, in comparison of the *Fatigue of having nothing to do*, and the *irksome* Vanity of *wasting* time for want of skil or business to employ it. And hence it is, that Men that are *diligent and faithfull* in their Callings do generally meet with fewer  
*Tempta-*

*Temptations, and find more Strength and Spirit to resist them, than those that are fasten'd with Ease and Idleness, and have so much time upon their hands that they are willing to afford it at the cheapest rate, and take even the Wages of Sin, rather than work out their own Salvation.* A Man that lives upon his honest Labour and Industry has something else to do than to *spore and drink* away his time, or to *fool* it away in *drinking, gaming, and other lurching* and prodigal Expences; and therefore when the Devil comes to tempt him to these and the like *sharping* and extravagant Courses, he easily *detects* his Fallacies and *resists* his Charms. He finds his Diligence brings him *Riches and Honours*, and that his *faithfull* Dealing keeps his Mind always *serene and cheerfull*; he feels himself satisfied in his virtuous and conscientious way, and knows that Vice and the Devil are *Cheats*, but that God and Goodness will plentifully reward all them that diligently seek them. It remains, in the third and last place, to shew

Phil. 2.12.

## III. What

III. What Assurance we have that the Devil will yield to our Resistance, and *flee from us*. By his *flying* is surely meant his *withdrawing* his great *Temptations*, and leaving us to *enjoy the Victories* we have *fairly* won by our vigorous and undaunted *Resistance* of him. Every *Repulse* we give him drives him to a greater *distance* from us, and makes him more *wary* for the future how he repeats his *Errour*, and *meddles* any more with those that are clad in *Armour of Light*, and to his peril he has found too strong and well-appointed for him. So that if every way we *guard* our selves against him, if we *mortifie* our Bosom-Lusts, clear our Hearts of the *Love* of this World, and *fortifie* every weak Grace and good Inclination in us, we shall soon be *eased* of our Adversary, and by degrees *advance* to that *secure* and *impregnable* State St. John speaks of, as the *peculiar* Privilege and Happiness of eminent and victorious Christians (whom he describes by their *high* and *divine* Extraction) 1 Joh. 5. 18. *Who-soever is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* And,

(1st.) This

(1st.) This Happiness we may promise our selves from the *Veracity* and *Power* of God, whose *Captive* the Devil is, and who can shorten his *Chains*, and put him and his Legions to flight whenever he pleases. *The God of Peace* Rom. 16.  
(saith *S. Paul*) shall bruise *Satan* under 10.  
your feet shortly; but first he will force him to flee from you (if he does not desist in time) as he did from our *Saviour*, when he had tried all his *Policies* upon him *in vain*, and (like a *Prodigal* and *Bankrupt* Gamester) stak'd what was none of his own, even *all the Kingdoms and Glory of the World* Matth. 4.  
at once: Then (saith the Evangelist) 11.  
*the Devil leaveth him, and behold, Angels came and ministered unto him.* And highly probable it is by the frequent mention of these *heavenly Guards* in sacred History, and by their seasonable appearing to the Servants of God in their *spiritual Straits* and *Agonies*, that 'tis an ordinary part of their *Ministry* to assist and cherish good Men in their *Tryals*; and that after their *signal Victories* God is often pleased to employ his *Angels* to chastise the *Insolence* of their restless Enemies, to chase away the evil Spirits that infest them, and

frustrate their *revengesfull* Designs upon them; as when some mighty *Monarch*, transported with *surprizing* and *impatient* Joy, for the glorious *Victories* of his beloved Son over his revolted Subjects, presently sends him a more *splendid* and *numerous* Train, composed of the bravest *Spirits* and the noblest *Troops* of his Kingdom; whom he strictly charges to assist the *Conqueror* at their utmost Peril, while he scatters his *Enemies that Delight in War*; and by all possible means prevent the *rallying* of the proud and perfidious Rebels.

And as we may rest on the Faithfulness and Power of God to compell these *daring* and *mighty* Spirits to an *inglorious* Flight, whenever there is occasion for it: So

(2ly.) We may be ordinarily sure of being eased of their Company, considering their *high* and *haughty* Temper is such as will not bear any brisk Opposition or Resistance from us. The Devil is too *proud* and *sensible* a Spirit to out-stand a *shamesfull* Repulse, or to wait upon us only to be the triumph of our *Faith* and *Constancy*; if he finds us *untractable*, he is gone, and flings away

away in *Disdain* to see his Fallacies *detected*, his Allurements *scorn'd*, and his great Importunities *slurr'd*, and answer'd only with *Opprobrious* and *Cold Neglect*. Thus when the Gospel at its *first Rising* on the *dark Idolatrous World*, had *unmask* his *Impious Delusions*, and laid open his *Lewd Impostures* to the *View* of those he had miserably *Blinded*, immediately he *flies* the Stage of his *Cruel Tragedies*, his *Riddleing Oracles* are struck *Dumb*, and his *Temples* forsaken at once by *him* and his *Worshippers*; while the hideous *Groans* of *Departing Spirits* proclaim'd with what *Reluctancy* they *Resign'd* their *Usurped Empire*, and gave place to the *Just* and *Sovereign Powers* of *Truth* and *Godliness*. Besides,

(3dly.) There is a *Majesty* in *Goodness* where-ever it appears, which strikes an *Awe* into all *base* and *degenerate* *Spirits*: and the more it *displays* it self in *resisting evil*, the more power it has to *scatter* the *Agents* and *Abettors* of *Vice* and *Wickedness*. We have a *visible* instance of this, in the *vain Attempts* of *rude* and *insolent* *Men* upon the *Faith* and *Sincerity* of such as are of a *right Conversation*; when  
G 2 they

they meet with Persons of *Steady* Virtue and Principles, that won't be *smooth'd* or *rallied* into Vice, they are soon sick of their Company, and after an *unhappy Assault* or two are glad of any opportunity to *steal away* from them, as *People being ashamed steal away when they flee in Battle*; they cannot endure the Presence of such *nice* and *religious* Fools (as they *fluently* call them) that won't *gratify* a Friend by *sinning* with him, *i.e.* provoke and affront his Maker, to please him: and so they give them over for Men of *Desperate* and *invincible* Integrity. In short, real Goodness is so much *Divinity reflected* upon the Soul of Man, the *united Rays* of which do as easily drive away the *Spirits of Darkness*, as the *rising Sun* discharges the *Shades of Night*, and sends away the *Beasts of Prey* to their *dismal* and *stouthfull* Dens, where perpetual *Telling* and *Horror*, with *Darkness*, dwell.

Now to draw to a Conclusion; if the Devil flies at our Resistance, hence it follows,

1. That 'tis merely our own *Baseness* and *Cowardice* that enslaves us to him.
- The true *Spirit of Christianity* is a  
*noble*

noble and victorious Spirit, that breaths nothing but Victory and Triumph; and therefore if we are *Christians*, 'tis in vain to think of *excusing* our selves, while we stoop to the *Wasselage* of Sin and Satan, and meanly *cringe* to the *Enemy* and *Betrayer* of our Peace and Happiness. For to say that we have no power to resist him, isto renounce our Christianity, and resist a greater than he, I mean, the blessed Spirit of God, who is ever ready to *inforce* our Endeavours, and (in the Apostle's Phrase) *always causeth us to triumph* in <sup>2 Cor. 2.</sup> *Christ*. And is it not enough to make <sup>14.</sup> the Blood rise in our *Faces*, and fill our *Hearts* with Indignation and Horror, but to hear our selves call'd the *Slaves* and *Properries* of Fiends and Devils? And yet this is the *honourable* Character we bestow upon our selves, as long as we *disclaim* all Ability to resist them. The Truth is, the Devil has no *deeper Policy*, than to persuade men to put the *Powers*, which God has given them, out of their *own* hands into *his*, and then complain of their *Impotency* to *resist* him, and so wait for the happy hour of *irresistible* Grace to support them against his *irresistible*

*Malice*, and the mean time suffer themselves to be *led Captive by him at his Will*. And certainly *this* of all the ways that lead down to Hell, is the *very shortest cut* to everlasting Perdition.

2. This clears the Providence of God in suffering so many *Legions* of evil Spirits to *molest* his Church. Were they the Messengers of an *angry Deity*, sent to *worry* and *devour* the Race of Mankind; or were we left to their *Malice* and *Cruelty*, in a *naked* and *Defenceless* State, we might well complain of our *hard* Circumstances, and despair to find the *Prints* of a *just* and *holy* Providence in so *dark* and *terrible* a Dispensation as this. But since the *Spirits* of the *Air* have only a *Permission* to try our Obedience to our *Maker* and *sovereign Lord*, and follow the *ill Conduct* of their *distorted Nature* so far as to tempt us to the Evils we can *refuse*, and thereby to *rouse* our slothfull Spirits, and *breath* our Virtues and Graces into more *perfect* and *victorious* Habits, hereafter to be crowned with eternal Glories, there is nothing in all this that reflects upon the Providence of God: nay we cannot have

a fuller Assurance of his Equity and Goodness, considering our *excessive Obligations* to him, that the *Powers* he confers upon us are (at least) *equal* to the *Task* he imposes, and that the *Reward* of our *Fidelity* will be *infinitely greater*. Wherefore, *Lastly*, Let all that hath been spoken excite us to a *speedy and vigorous* Resistance of our *mortal Enemy* the Devil. When we reflect upon his Character (which is a *dreadfull Complication* of all *hateful Properties*) and consider that he hates us to the *Depths of Hell*, it seems impossible that we should ever be *inveigled* into a *Moment's Truce* with him, and much more (as many visibly are) that we should be *proud* of his *Chains*, and *fond* of our *Slavery* to him. There is no *treating* with so notorious a *Traitor* as he has ever been: no *dallying* with so *curst* an Adversary, whom nothing *less* will please than our *eternal Exclusion* from God and Heaven. If therefore we would *deliver* our *Souls* from the *band* of *Hell*, let us immediately *fortifie* our selves with strong and *impregnable Resolutions* never to yield to the *Perfidious Tyrant*, never to

Ephes. 6.  
17.

*sheath the Sword of the Spirit, or put off our Christian Armour, till we have driven him out of all his inglorious Conquests, retriev'd our indisputable Rights, and recover'd the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Then let us pay our Vows with Hands and Hearts lifted up to Heaven, and make good our Resolutions against the very next Temptation that comes in our way; and not tempt the Devil by our faint Repulses, or more unreasonable Delays, to persuade us to adjourn the Execution of them from one day and year to another, and (with like Reason) to our dying Hour. He cares not how much we threaten our Vices, and boast what we will do (in despite of the Devil and them) hereafter; so long as he perceives our kind Reserves, our secret Dalliances, and our amorous Inclinations to them, he hopes the threatened Hereafter will never come, knowing that God also has threatened to withdraw his Spirit from those that violate their Faith and his Patience with them, and he does not value all we can do without him. He doubts not but to be strong enough for us, when he has shatter'd our Resolutions, and broken our*

our

our solemn and sacred Vow to God and our Redeemer, and we have long resisted and grieved his Holy Spirit; especially when we come to grapple at once with Death and him; when our Consciences turn on his side, and fly in our Faces; when our Lives upbraid us, our Sins stand in dreadful Array before us, our Diseases invade and seize upon our vital Spirits, and our bodily Pains molest and trouble us; when the Pangs of Death are coming upon us; when we are gasping for our flying Breath; When our Eyes fail, and our Hearts sink within us, at the Prospect of a dismal Eternity. In this ghastly and feeble State the Devil is not afraid of our Resistance; he defies (and well he may) the best we can do now; which is to cry bitterly to Heaven, and beg with our last Breath and Tears, that God, whose Assistance we have all along refused, and who has therefore threatened to laugh at our Calamity, and deride our Fear, would send us help from his holy Place, and with his Almighty Arm turn our unresisted Enemy to flight; who, we fear, is come to carry us away in triumph with him. It concerns us therefore to be before-hand with our Adver-

Prov. I. 26.

2 Sam. 3:  
33, 34.

Adversary, and to acquit our selves like men of *Forefight, Courage, and Resolution*; and not die as a Fool dieth, with our *Hands bound, and our Feet put into Fetters*: But assert our *Liberty* with the utmost Vigour and Bravery, and resolve rather to die (*resisting unto Blood*) than defile our Consciences, and *enslave* our Souls to Hell's *apostate and damned Spirits*. We have great *Allies and Confederates* in Heaven, and the Prayers of all good Men upon Earth to help us. To Heaven let us look up, where our *triumphant Leader* lives (*beyond his Conquest, Death*) for evermore: and let us follow him, in his *living and victorious* way, up to his *eternal Throne*, depending on his Power and Promise, *Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* Come on then, and let us not eternally *befoo* our selves; this is a *happy Day*, if we *resist now*, we are sure to *conquer*; to *Morrow* we know not whose the *Field* shall be.

A  
DISCOURSE  
Shewing the  
CONSISTENCY  
OF  
God's Infinite Goodness  
With His  
FOREKNOWLEDGE  
Of the  
FALL of MAN.

---

By NATHANAEL WHALEY, A.M.,  
Rector of *Broughton* in *Northamptonshire*.

---

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. H. for Brab. Aylmer at the  
*Three Pigeons* against the *Royal Exchange* in  
*Cornhill*. 1698,

DISCOURSE

Shewing the

CONSISTENCY

OF

God's Infinite Goodness

With His

FOREKNOWLEDGE

Of the

FALL of MAN.

By NATHANIEL WHISTON, A.M.

Rector of Brougham in Northamptonshire.

L O N D O N.

Printed by J. H. for Brod. Nod. at the  
Printers against the Royal Exchange in  
St. Michael's Lane.

1692.

TO THE  
READER.

**T**HE Minutes of this Discourse were formerly sent to a Person of good Quality, who was pleased to desire my Thoughts upon the Question, How the Infinite Goodness of God was consistent with his Foreknowledge of the Fall of Man? I was well assured this Desire did not proceed from an ill Tincture of Mind, from a Sceptical Levity, or any other Principle but what became a very serious and prudent Inquirer; accordingly I applied my self to one of that Character; and am

To the Reader.

now encouraged by the Success of  
that Essay, to publish this little  
Tract; which, I heartily wish,  
may be usefull also to another sort  
of Inquirers, I mean those who  
in their own Defence are forc't to  
question every thing in Religion,  
be it never so clear, if it does not  
shine upon their ill-chosen and  
fallacious Interests.

N. W.

Q. Hom

Q. *How is the Infinite Goodness of God consistent with his Foreknowledge of the Fall of Man?*

There are two things evidently Implied in this Case :

1. The Infinite Goodness of God : which duely considered will effectually scatter all our Melancholy Thoughts, and Misgiving Apprehensions of his Arbitrary Dealings with us. For if God is Infinitely Good in himself, he must be *naturally* disposed to be Kind and Beneficent to his Creatures : and therefore he could not make them with a Design to make them Miserable, either in respect of their Original Frame, or for want of due Conduct towards the Good and Happy ends for which by his Sovereign Pleasure they were at first Created.

2. His Fore-knowledge of the Thoughts and Free Actions of Men, which

which is the Highest and most Perfect Degree of Knowledge. It is a far less Perfection to know what is Past, or Present, or Dependent upon Necessary Causes, than merely by the Force of Thought to Foresee the Motions of Voluntary Agents, and Infallibly Discover which way they will Determine themselves. This is the wonderfull Prerogative of the Divine Understanding, which being Infinite (as the Psalmist styles it) must be extended to all the Objects of Knowledge, and therefore to the Free and Future Actions of Men: For, that they are within the sphere of Omniscience, the Actual Completion of many Eminent Prophecies in Scripture is a plain Demonstration, and such as the Eagle-eyed Socinian could never bear the Dazling Evidence of, but Flutters and is forc'd to shew his Dizziness and Blindness, as often as it is Objected to him. And surely nothing can derogate more from the Wisdom of our Creator, than to say of him, that he knew not what he was doing when he made Man (the Master-piece of the visible Creation:) Or that he did not see the End of his Work, when he Inspired him with Reason

Reason and Freedom ; as certainly he did not, if he did not foresee his Fall, and Discover what Use he would make of his Faculties, till his Creature disclosed it to him.

But it is not my present Business to clear the Doctrine of Prescience, but supposing God's Foreknowledge of the Fall of Man, to shew the Consistency of it with his Infinite Goodness, which I shall endeavour to do by the Evidence of the following Propositions.

*Prop. 1:* That the most Perfect and Comprehensive Thought or Notion we can have of God, is that he is a Being Infinite in all Kinds of Perfection, such as Existence, Power, Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Justice, &c. each of which, to the utmost Possibility of Perfection, is no less Essential to the Divine Nature, than the Faculty of Reasoning is to the Humane : So that whenever we speak of God, we are supposed to speak of that Glorious Being that has all Transcendent Excellencies in himself. And hence it follows,

1. That the Attributes or Perfections of God are very agreeable and consistent one with another : or that

H

there

there is a mutual *Concent* and *Harmony* between them, without the least *Jar* or *Contrariety* to obstruct their happy Union in the same individual and ever blessed Nature.

2. Since all Perfections are united in the divine Nature, and essential to it, they must be also inseparable one from another: so that God must be infinitely good and just at the same time that he is infinitely wise, powerfull, and holy, *i. e.* all his Perfections must be co-existent, seeing they all Center in one and the same unchangeable Nature. And hence we may be sure that God never *devests* himself of one Attribute, when ever he chuses to glorifie another, how inconsistent soever they may seem to our weak and inadequate Apprehensions of them. And therefore

3. We must expect no act of Goodness from God, but what is consistent with infinite Knowledge, Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness: nor need we fear any Severity or Punishment from him, but what a good, a holy and righteous God can inflict upon us.

4. Hence it follows, that no *seeming* Contrariety between the Perfections

ons

ons of God, or any of his Actions and Dealings with his Creatures, is any *real* Argument against the Consistency of them. For instance, it may seem to some very serious Persons to reflect upon the Goodness of God, at the same time to foresee the Sin of Man, and to put him into a condition in which he might sin and be miserable, which (they will say) might have been prevented by staying his creating hand. But how hard soever it may be for a finite Understanding to account for it; this is no reasonable Objection against the Goodness of our Maker; it being no less certain that God is good, than that Man is created and fallen, or that there is such a glorious Being as God in the World; for, if such an one there is, he is infinitely perfect, and then he must be infinitely good, and was so when he made the World, and will be so to eternal Ages, being *the same* yesterday, to day, and for ever. This is as bright a Truth as any is within the whole Circle of Science. There is no foundation of Certainty, if there is no God; and there can be none that is not perfectly good.

H z

Let

Let us therefore hold to this Principle, that God is Infinite in Goodness, and Knowledge, and all other Perfections, and the consequence will be, that his creating Man after he had foreseen his Fall, is no reasonable Objection against his Goodness, or any of his glorious Attributes; because it is impossible for a Being that has all possible Perfection in himself, to act beneath the Dignity of his Nature, or to injure his Creatures by doing any thing which they might justly to Eternity accuse him of.

This, I confess, does not ease us of the difficulty of apprehending, how it consists with the Goodness of God to make a Creature, who (he knew) would sin and be miserable: But then the greater that Difficulty is, the more clearly it shews the Weakness and Incompetency of our Understandings to censure and sit in Judgment upon the Actions of God; and that it becomes us to content our selves with what we certainly do or may know and believe concerning him and his Attributes.

*Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made*

Rom. 9.  
20, 21.

made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay? Oh the depth of Rom. 11. the Riches both of the Wisdom and Know-<sup>33.</sup> ledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!

*Prop. II.* Tho' God is infinitely good in himself, we must not expect that he should make his Creatures perfectly good and happy. For, as absolute Perfection is essential to the Notion of God, so is Dependence and Imperfection to the Notion of a Creature: which proves that there are Degrees of Perfection which are not communicable to Creatures; and for those which are, all we can expect from a good Creator is, that he should communicate such competent Degrees of Goodness to every Creature, as are agreeable to their several Natures and Capacities, and conducive to wise and excellent ends, i. e. that every thing should be made good in its Kind, and in Proportion to the good end of its Creation. And this Rule (as *Moses* tells us) was exactly observed to the least Mite or Insect. *Gen. I. 31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it*

*was very good* ; Which could not have been said of every Creature, if there was any Defect in the Creation of Men or Angels, who are the Top and Glory of the Creation. And if they were *made very good* in the unerring Judgment of God, tho' we may fancy still that they might have been made *better*, we cannot accuse the Goodness of God for making them as they were made, both because he judges infinitely better than we do, and because to be *made very good* implies no less, than that God advanc'd them at first to a very happy Condition, and gave them all that was needfull to secure and improve their Happiness; and more than this we have Reason to think was not suitable to his infinite Wisdom ; and since God is as wise as he is good, all we can promise our selves is, that he will do all the good that can be wisely done, but no more.

The Summ of this is, that absolute and perfect Goodness being essential to God, we must not look for it in the Creatures, whose Natures are incapable of it ; and that relative or creating Goodness, is and must be commensurate to the Nature of Creatures, and the

the good ends for which they were created. And then, if God gave Man an excellent Nature, and endued him with all the Perfections of Mind and Body that were requisite to his temporal and eternal Happiness, it is evident that he has done all that became a good and bountifull Creator to do for him.

Now let us put the matter upon this Issue: all that was requisite to the present or future Happiness of Man was provided to his hand, when God made him a reasonable, innocent and immortal Being, and gave him power to secure and enlarge his Happiness by acting according to the Dictates of his Reason, and persevering in his Innocence and Obedience to his Maker. Was not this an Act of adoreable Goodness? And did it not deserve the highest Returns of *Duty* and *Gratitude* to the Author of it? But where was then the Error in Man's Creation? Was it that it brought him into a State of Subjection to his Maker? But this is essential to every Creature; and by this Argument there ought to have been no Creation at all. Or was it, that Man being made a free and reason-

nable Being, might possibly abuse the Goodness of his Maker, transgress his Commandments, and so make himself miserable, when nothing but himself could do it. 'Tis true, this was the primitive State both of Angels and Men: but the question is, where is the fault of it, when both the one and the other were made faultless and happy, and might have continued so (had they pleased) for ever? If there was no fault in the Creature, there could be none in the Creator: and then it will be hard to find one any where else.

But still some Men cannot bring their Minds to apprehend, but that it must needs argue a Defect in creating Goodness, to make a Creature of the most curious Form, and the noblest Endowments of Mind and Spirit, that can act below the Dignity of its excellent Nature, and by sinning make it self miserable. But I would fain know what rational Ground these Men have for so transcendent a Conceit as this. Would they be more than Angels, or any Creature they can possibly frame an Idea of? And because God is unchangeably good and happy, will they charge his Goodness for not making

making them equal to him? They don't use to question the Goodness of God for making so vast a difference as he has done between the several Orders of Creatures, for not giving every Plant the Fragrancy of a Rose, or every Flower the Beauty of a Tulip, or every Beast the Courage and Majesty of a Lion; or for making the Earth and all the Furniture of this inferior World *for the Service of Men*. And far less Reason they have to tax him for creating Man for his own *reasonable and peculiar Service*, which is the highest Freedom and Glory of a Creature; or for not setting him above the Angels of Heaven, as he must have done, if he had created him in a fixt and unchangeable State of Happiness. And why should they imagine that God cannot, without reproaching his Goodness, make a reasonable Creature subject to Change and Vanity, to Sin and Misery, when they see a World of such Creatures before them? Do they really think that God created the World only to disparage his Goodness, and expose the best of his Creatures to Misery? Does every free and reasonable Being reproach the  
creating

creating Goodness of God? If it does not, there could be no Fault in creating it, though it might sin and be miserable; if it does, then in Honour and Equity God ought not to have made one reasonable Creature or free Agent: and then he could not have made one happy Creature, since none but reasonable Creatures are capable of true and proper Happiness. And what is the consequence of all this, but that God ought to have made no World at all? For if Honour and Equity would not suffer him to furnish a World with reasonable Creatures, who might abuse their Reason and be miserable: Honour, Wisdom, and Goodness would not suffer him to make a World without them, since such a World would not be worthy of its Creator, having no Creature in it that could relish his Goodness, celebrate his Praise, partake of any of his Moral Perfections, or receive any true Happiness from him; and better none, than such a dull, useless, and insignificant World as this.

*Prop. III.* That nothing could better become the Goodness and all other Perfe-

Perfections of God, than to make a Creature after his *own Image*, because this is the highest Manifestation of creating Goodness. The Image of God is the most absolute Pattern of Being and Excellency; and therefore to make a Creature after his Image, is to make the most absolute and excellent Creature: and to do this is most agreeable to the Divine Perfections; and then nothing can be more unreasonable than to suppose any Discord amongst them in the Accomplishment of it. When God therefore said, *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness*, 'tis plain that this was done with the Approbation of all his Attributes; and that there was nothing to obstruct his making Man a reasonable and free Agent, and endowing him with divine and virtuous Principles, because this was to make him after the Image of his Maker. Now a reasonable Creature having Freedom of Choice, may chuse well or ill; for though he cannot chuse Evil for its own sake, because there is nothing in the Nature of Evil to recommend it to him: yet when it is varnished with a shew of Pleasure or Advantage, that is,

is, when it puts on a Vizzor or Appearance of good (which all evil may do, except apparent and immediate Destruction) it may be unhappily mistaken, and so chosen for it. 'Tis certain there was no natural Propensity to evil in the original Constitution of Men or Angels: but still where there is a Liberty of choice, there is and must be a Possibility of chusing Wrong; for he only is free that chuses the good or evil which he had power not to have chosen: if he could not refuse either, he cannot be said to act upon Choice, but Necessity. And indeed the very Notion of *Moral Evil* implies a chusing or voluntary Agent, there being no other way for sin to enter into the World, but by being *chosen*, i. e. by the Act of some voluntary Agent which might chuse amiss; and so a voluntary Agent implies a Possibility of sinning. Man therefore might sin, tho' he was made *very good*, or, as it became his Creator to make him, a free and reasonable Being, *after his own Image and Likeness*.

But here the Question may be asked; Might not God have given Man a reasonable Soul without a Liberty of Choice?

Choice? and so prevented the Entrance of Sin into the World? I answer, 'tis hard to say what God cannot do merely with respect to his infinite Power, since by that he can do all things that do not imply a Contradiction in the Nature of them. But then it is utterly unaccountable, that a wise, a good, and a just God should make a Creature only to understand what is fit and right to be done, and not give him a power to chuse what is good and right. For what use is there of Reason, but to teach us what we should chuse? And what advantage is it to know this, if we can make no use of our Knowledge, as certainly we cannot, if we have no *Faculty* to chuse what we discern to be good and excellent? What were we the better for knowing there is a God and a Heaven, if we could not love and chuse them for our Happiness? 'Tis not the Knowledge of any Excellency that can make us happy, without a Disposition to enjoy it; and what we are disposed to enjoy we love, desire, and chuse to have a Propriety in; and then a Creature that cannot chuse at all, cannot be happy: and then, I am sure, he cannot be made after the Image of God. Are

Are not Moral Goodness and Virtue absolutely necessary to make a reasonable Creature happy? And does not Morality in the Nature of it imply a *free* as well as a *reasonable* Agent? Do not the greatest Pleasures in the World, in the Judgment of the wisest and best Men, flow from this Reflection, that they have *chosen the better part*, and preferred the pleasing of God, the Honour of their Nature, and the Peace of their Consciences, before the Charms and Gratifications of Sense, when they might have chosen and enjoyed them? Now, if the great use of Reason be to guide our Choice, and if Liberty of Choice be necessary to the Happiness of a reasonable Being, it is a plain Contradiction to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, (how feasible soever it may be to his Power) to suppose him to make a reasonable Creature without a Liberty of Choice.

Again, A Being that has no Freedom to dispose of its own Actions, cannot deserve well or ill, or be accountable to God for any thing it does, or does not do: and then were the World made up of such Creatures, there could be no such thing as Religion in it; no

room for Virtue or Vice, for Rewards or Punishments, or any occasion for a just or governing Providence; Man would be no better than an intellectual Machine, or a curious Piece of Clock-work, which, how true soever its Motions are, makes no Returns of Praise or Gratitude to the Author of it. And what a wild supposition is this, that to introduce a reasonable Creature in the room of Angels and Men, excludes almost all the glorious Attributes of God, from having any thing to do in the Creation and Government of the rational World? But to come to the greatest difficulty in the case before us.

*Prop. IV.* God's Fore-knowledge of the Fall of Man cannot blemish his Goodness in creating him. It has been already proved, that God who is infinitely good might make a reasonable Creature and a free Agent: and that it highly became him to do this, because this was to make a Creature *after his own Image*, and that is the highest Instance of creating Goodness; and one would think, this was enough to clear at once the Goodness and every other Perfe-

Perfection of God, from the least Defect or Error in the Creation of Man. But still some Persons are troubled to think that God should intrust Man with a Liberty of Choice, when he was infallibly certain beforehand that he would abuse it; and this they apprehend to be inconsistent with perfect Goodness. But what Reason have they to think so? And what is their meaning by this Objection? Is it to blemish the History of Man's Creation, or to clear the Goodness of God by denying his Prescience? Do they mean to prove, that God did not create Men or Angels, and then leave them to their own Choice, to stand or fall, to be happy or miserable? This they may be sure he did not, if it was inconsistent with his Goodness: and if it was not, why are they troubled to think that he did do it? Or would they prove that God did not foresee the consequence of creating a free Agent? Let them first answer all the Arguments, Affirmations, and Predictions in Scripture, which plainly prove that the free Thoughts and Actions of Men lie open and naked to the Prescience of God; and then let them consider what they

they gain by excluding his Prescience. Does it at all mend the matter to say, that God made innumerable Creatures that would sin and be miserable, but knew it not till it was too late to prevent it? or can they seriously allow themselves to think, that he laid the Foundations of the Earth, and created Man upon it before ever he was *master* of his Design, or was sure whether it would turn to account or not? How could he make a Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed *for ever*, and distinguish them from all the Families of the Earth, if he did not foresee that *his Children would keep the way of the Lord*; or that there would always be a Generation of Men in the World of the same Stamp and Integrity, that would prefer the Worship and Service of the true God before the Pleasures of Sense, and signalize their Faith (as *Abraham* did) by the Freedom and Ingenuity of their Obedience to him? Let them, I say, impartially weigh the Consequences on both sides, and they will clearly see that they bear as hard upon the Wisdom of God, by denying his Prescience, as they fear they should do upon his Goodness, by asserting it.

Geh. 18:]  
18, 19.

I

Now

Now to ease them of this Fear ; that God's Foreknowledge of the Fall of Man was no blemish to his creating Goodness, will, I doubt not, sufficiently appear, if they candidly consider these three things.

1. That his Prescience had not the least Influence upon their Fall or Disobedience to him. Our first Parents might have lived and been eternally happy upon the Stock of their original Virtues and Endowments, and the Divine Favour reflected upon them, had they used them as they ought ; and if they had done so, God had never foreseen their Sin or Misery. Neither did they sin because he *foresaw* they would, but merely because they *would* sin : and therefore they would have sinned, whether he had foreseen what they would do or not ; and so their Fall could not in any respect be imputed to his Knowledge of it, no more than the Death of those eighteen Persons upon whom Luk. 13:4. the Tower in *Siloam* fell, was imputable to the Eye that beheld the Falling of that fatal Tower. Now if the Prescience of God had no Influence upon the Apostacy of his Creatures, his Goodness in creating them in a happy State

State could be never the less for his Knowing that they would abuse it.

2. That his Foreknowledge of their Fall did not hinder him from using the most proper and likely means to prevent it. When God made Man upright, he gave him power to stand and and persevere in his Innocence, and to secure, improve, and immortalize his Glory and Happiness; and when he had done this, he gave him a loud and timely warning of the great danger of Failing in his Obedience to him, telling him that *in the day of his Trans-* Gen. 3:17 *gression he should surely die.* And is not this a fair Representation of the Goodness of God in the utmost degree that became a wise, a holy, and a faithfull Creator? Does not this plainly demonstrate, that the making Man a free Agent was no Contrivance of his Creators to draw him into Sin or Misery? And that his Prescience was so far from serving any such end, that it took the most natural and proper course to prevent it; admonish him of his imminent Danger, and foretold his *dying day* to be the same with that of his eating the forbidden Fruit? Which certainly God had never done,

after he had put him into a way to live for ever, if either he had not foreseen his Danger, or was willing to connive at his Death and Misery. But more than this,

3. God's Foreknowledge of Man's Abuse of his Goodness was no real Disparagement to it, because it was in his power to turn that Abuse to an excellent end, and to take occasion by our Fall to manifest the Glory of his Attributes in a far higher degree than was possible merely by his act of Creation. 'Tis the glorious Prerogative of God to bring good out of evil, which must have been concealed for ever, if he had never suffered evil to have entred into the World. The Glories of the Divine Wisdom, Love, and Goodness in the Redemption of Mankind; the Glories of God's Patience, Mercy, and Justice towards the different Ranks and Degrees of Sinners, do all depend upon his Permission of the Sins and Follies of Men, and applying suitable Remedies to them, and had never appeared upon the *Theatre* of this World, if it had not been for the tragical Mis-carriages of our first Parents. The fall of Man was indeed a vast Unhappiness  
in

in it self: but then it opened wonderfull Scenes of happy and surprizing Providences, *which the Angels of Heaven desire to look into*, and will be the Delight and Admiration of all good Men to Eternity. Above all, the Incarnation of the Son of God (for which there would have been no occasion in a State of Innocence) was a prodigious Demonstration of his unparalleled Love and Favour to the lapsed Race of Mankind, a strangely proper and most powerfull means to *reconcile the World unto himself*, to promote Holiness in several Instances, and Virtue in several Kinds, which could never have grown in Paradise, and to advance the humane Nature far above the State and Dignity from which the first *Adam* fell. For the Union of the humane Nature with the Divine is not only an Argument of the sincerest Love and good Will to Men, but a most efficacious and transcendent Principle of the highest Perfection and Happiness that the Nature of Man is capable of. It is certain, the Recovery of Mankind required another kind of Dispensation than what was suitable to a State of Innocence; and surely *God* would never have *manifested him-*

## The Goodness of God

*self in the Flesh, or discovered such infinite Treasures of Grace and Wisdom in the Gospel of his Son, but to exalt the Nature he took upon him to a more eminent Height, to enlarge our Capacities, and to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature, in a new and extraordinary Measure, that (as the Apostle Eph. 3.19. speaks) we might be filled with all the Fulness of God.*

Now, if the Fall of Man was an occasion of greater Manifestations of the Glory of God, and his Love to Mankind, than were possible in a State of Innocence, it certainly can be no Reproach to his Goodness, when he had foreseen, that he did not prevent his Fall. For what Reason is there, that the foreseen Unhappiness of a Creature, which is purely owing to himself, should confine the infinite Goodness and Wisdom of his Maker, who can as easily bring good out of evil, as a Creature out of nothing? Was the immense Bounty of God exhausted by his act of Creation? or can his infinite Wisdom find no other ways of expressing his Goodness? Cannot he that made us after his own Image, create us a-new after the Image of his Son, without breaking and

and dissolving our Frame? Or can we think that when God foresaw our Fall, he was not aware of the opportunities it gave him of magnifying his Grace and Goodness, his Wisdom, Patience, Holiness, Veracity, and Justice, in contriving and carrying on the stupendous Work of our Redemption? Nay who doubts but the Saints in Heaven are advanced to more eminent Degrees of Glory by the Merits of their Redeemer, than they could have been by the Merits of their own Righteousness, in case our first Parents had never fallen? In a word, God can serve his own wise and gracious ends by the Sins of Men, without contributing to them; and since he can, and has taken care to raise us by our Fall to higher Capacities and Attainments in Virtue and Happiness, than we enjoy'd, or could have reacht in our former Station; it is I think a very plain and evident Truth, that God's Foreknowledge of our Fall was no blemish to his creating Goodness; or that his Goodness was consistent with his Prescience, as well as with all his other Perfections.

And now, I hope, I have said enough to satisfy any candid inquisitive Person,

1. That there was no Defect or Blemish in the Creation of Man, or in his being made a reasonable and free Agent, since he was created in a State of Innocence and Pleasure, and wanted nothing to crown and complete his Happiness, but what depended on himself, the right use of his own Reason and Freedom, without which it was impossible for him, or any other Being to be happy. Thus it became God to make him, and thus through his good Pleasure he was created : so that, after all the Ruins of Humane Nature, Man's *original Frame* still stands as a glorious *Monument* of his Creator's Goodness, and will do so to Eternity.

2. That the Fall of our first Parents from this good Estate was not owing to God's Foreknowledge of it, or any Act or Influence of his, or to any want of Power or Warning they might justly have expected from him. And since their Fall can in no Respect be imputed to him, we may be fully assured that his Goodness is not in the least degree disparaged by his Prescience or  
Per-

Permission of it. For is not he infinitely good to me, who puts it into my power to be happy, if I please, for ever? And lest I should neglect my own Happiness, kindly warns me of the Danger and dismal Consequence of it; tho' after he has done all that became him to prevent it, he should not think fit to controul my Will, when he sees me bent upon my own Destruction?

3. That we have abundant Reason to praise and adore the Goodness of God, who at first created us after his own Image, in all the happy and delicious Circumstances, we could desire for our selves; and when we had wasted our original Stock of Happiness, was pleased to open the mighty Treasures of his Grace, and to give us new and surprizing Demonstrations of his Infinite Love and Favour; by which we are infallibly sure, that his Permission of our Fall was grounded upon great and admirable Reasons; and that God did not envy or neglect our Happiness, or want any Kindness for us that became the Creator and Preserver of Men.

And here I should conclude, were it not for one Objection which is apt to stick with some Persons, whose Satisfaction

faction is chiefly design'd in this Paper : and that is this ;

Seeing God is essentially good, might it not be expected that he should have over-ruled the Will of Man, when he saw him warping from his Obedience to him, and so prevented all the Sin and Misery, in which he has involv'd himself and his unhappy Posterity ?

This Objection I might fairly wave, having already said enough to furnish an Answer to it, and the rather because it does not lie against the Goodness of the Creation (the Vindication of which is my proper Task) but against the Goodness of Providence, and indeed against the whole œconomy of it. For if God ought to have prevented the first Commission of Sin, because he is essentially good, for the same Reason he ought not to suffer Sin to continue in the World, having ever had the same power to hinder the *Progress*, which he had at first to prevent the *Entrance* of Sin into the World. On the other hand, if God, who is essentially good, was not obliged to hinder the first Transgression, as I have formerly proved, neither is he obliged (farther than may serve the ends of his Providence)

dence) to put a stop to the Progress of Sin and Wickedness.

But to speak more directly to the Objection it self; there is no doubt but the Will of Man is subject to the sovereign Will of God; otherwise God must have made a Creature that he was not able to govern, which is utterly inconsistent with the natural Notions of an infinitely wise Creator and Governour. But therefore the proper question is, whether it becomes so wise a Creator and Governour to over-rule the Will of his Creatures, after he has put them upon an easie Tryal of Obedience to him, at least in the same act on which the grand Issue of the Tryal depends? or, since God had given our first Parents a Liberty of Choice, whether it was suitable to his infinite Wisdom to hinder them by his irresistible Power from chusing and eating the forbidden Fruit? Now the Resolution of this question is not hard, if we consider,

1. That God being infinitely wise, could not possibly lose an opportunity to do that, which was most agreeable to his infinite Wisdom and Goodness: and therefore since he did not hinder our Fall, when he did not want power

to

power to do it, the Event undeniably proves that he did not esteem it fit or prudential to interpose his irresistible power, and by it to save us from the Guilt and Misery which he saw us drawing upon our selves. There is nothing surer than that God, who looks thro' all the Natures, and comprehends all the Reasons of Things, has always some wise and unanswerable Reasons for every thing he does, or does not do, or permits the doing of by others in the World; and then I am sure nothing can be more reasonable than for us to acquiesce in all his Permissions, as well as in all the Disposals of his Providence, and not think our selves wise enough to mend the Wisdom and Rectitude of them. A wise and good Man wants no Argument to convince him that any thing is wise or just, so far as infinite Wisdom is concern'd in the Doing or Permission of it.

2. That the great Beauty and Wisdom of Providence, and the most natural and equitable Rule of Government consists in governing the several Orders of Beings, according to their respective Natures; and then to rule a free Agent by mere Force and Compulsion,

sion, to give Man a Liberty of Choice, and not permit the exercise of it, must needs derogate from the Wisdom and Beauty of his Providence: because this is to govern his Creature contrary to the Nature he himself had given him, *i. e.* contrary to the natural and most equitable Rule of Government. For why were we made free, if our Creator did not intend to leave us to our Choice? Is any Man the better for being forc't to do a good Action, or violently restrained from a bad? A forced Obedience can never deserve a Reward, or improve the least habit of Virtue or Goodness in us; both which depend upon the free and ingenuous Motions of the Will, exerting its own Liberty, and following the Light of Reason and Revelation, which is the true and only Perfection of it. Now, if a forc't Obedience could be no real Advantage to us, then it could not be expected from the Goodness of God that he should have over-ruled the Will, and suppress the noblest Principle he had planted in the Mind of Man, only to extort a thankless Obedience from him. But you will say, might not this have prevented his Fall?

I answer, Man had certainly sinned, if he had not freely performed that easy and reasonable Obedience his Maker required of him: and if he had, there would have been no occasion of God's over-ruling his Will; and therefore there can be no Reason to object against his not doing of it. But suppose at last, that God had done this, and that Man had been under a Necessity of being innocent, (or rather of not sinning) there could then have been no such thing as true Virtue and Obedience in the best Estate that ever the World was in, which is such a character of the Paradisiacal State, and the Wisdom of the Divine Government, as can never be reconciled to the essential Properties of either.

3. Lastly, It is a palpable Contradiction to the Divine Perfections to suppose, that the Goodness of God should oblige him to act contrary to the Rules of his Wisdom; or that God should abridge our first Parents of the Liberty of tasting the forbidden Fruit, upon the Penalty of Death, on purpose to prove their Obedience to him, and while they stood upon their Trial, render it utterly useless by his own Act, *i. e.* by determining their Wills contrary to the

the

the Freedom and Inclination of them.

*To Conclude.*

There is one Meditation which 'methinks should be sufficient of its self to revive the Spirits, and dispell the Doubts and Fears of all disconsolate Christians, concerning the Creation of Men and Angels, and the Carriage of the Divine Providence towards them; viz. that there is an innumerable Company of blessed Angels and Saints in Heaven continually adoring the glorious Constellation of Divine Attributes, admiring and celebrating, in joyfull Hymns and Anthems, the ~~indefeasible~~ Union and harmonious Consistency of them; while we short-sighted Mortals, dwelling in a dark and pensive Vale, under the Clouds of Melancholy and Ignorance, are apt to fancy an unnatural War and Incongruity between them, and vainly disquiet and perplex our selves about them. In Heaven we know there is and must be a right and perfect Understanding between all the blessed Inhabitants of that holy Place; and that there (as one that had been there tells us) *we shall know as we are known*; 1 Cor. 13. and the mean while we may comfort <sup>12.</sup> our selves with this, that the excellent  
Spirits

Spirits above do all find their Happiness in God's infinite Goodness to them, and are able to answer all Objections that we, or any of his Creatures, are able to frame against it.

*F I N I S.*

---

*Some Books printed for B. Aylmer.*

**T**HIRTY Nine Sermons upon the Fifth Chapter of *St. Matthew*; being part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. By *Anthony Horneck*, D. D. late Preacher at the Savoy. To which is prefix'd his Life, writ by the Bishop of Bath and Wells: In two Vol. in 8vo.

The Council of *Trent* no Free Assembly: more fully discover'd by a Collection of Letters and Papers of the learned Dr. *Vargas*, and other great Ministers, who assisted at the said Synod in considerable Posts. Published from the Original Manuscripts in *Spanisk*, which were procured by the Right Honourable Sir *William Trumball's* Grand-Father, Envoy at *Brussels* in the Reign of King *James* the First. With an Introductory Discourse concerning Councils, shewing how they were brought under Bondage to the Pope. By *Michael Geddes*, L. L. D. and Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of *Sarum*. In 8vo.

A brief State of the *Socinian* Controversie, concerning a Trinity in Unity. By *Isaac Barrow*, D. D. late Master of *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*. In 24's, Price two Pence sticht.

